



1971

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

## REPORT

relating to the proposed construction of

# DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION NO. 2 STORES DEPOT R.A.A.F.

at

## Chester Hill, New South Wales

(THIRD REPORT OF 1971)

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION  
NO. 2 STORES DEPOT R.A.A.F.  
CHESTER HILL, NEW SOUTH WALES

R E P O R T

On 28 January 1971, His Excellency the Governor-General in Council referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report to the Parliament, the proposal for construction of domestic accommodation for No. 2 Stores Depot R.A.A.F. at Chester Hill, New South Wales.

The Committee have the honour to report as follows:

THE REFERENCE

1. The proposal referred to the Committee involves the construction of
  - an officers' mess and sleeping quarters;
  - a senior N.C.O.s' mess and sleeping quarters;
  - W.R.A.A.F. sleeping quarters;
  - airmen's sleeping quarters;
  - an airmen's mess and recreation centre;
  - a barracks group, stores, ration stores and garages; and
  - a gate control building.

It also includes associated engineering services, roads and footpaths, car parking and sporting facilities.

2. The complex will accommodate 366 personnel comprising 33 officers, 35 senior N.C.O.s and 231 O.R.s (male) and 5 officers, 10 senior N.C.O.s and 52 O.R.s (female) and is to replace substandard quarters at Bankstown.

3. The work is estimated to cost \$2,950,000.

#### THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

4. The Committee received written submissions and drawings from the Departments of Air and Works and took evidence from their representatives at a public hearing in Canberra. We inspected the depot's existing accommodation at Bankstown, the stores area at Regents Park and the site of the proposed development at Chester Hill.

#### NO. 2 STORES DEPOT R.A.A.F.

5. History No. 2 Stores Depot R.A.A.F., formed in July 1940, originally occupied six buildings at Waterloo, Sydney. Increasing wartime storage needs demanded additional stores and by September 1943, the depot occupied ten sites in Waterloo, Rosebery and Alexandria. In May 1946, an area of land was transferred to the R.A.A.F. together with some stores buildings and by August 1946, Headquarters No. 2 Stores Depot had become established at Regents Park as the main R.A.A.F. stores holding site for New South Wales.

6. The area originally acquired by the Commonwealth was 117 acres. There were several adjustments to the holding subsequently when some land was returned to the original owners and additional land and easements were acquired to re-route the rail spur serving the depot. The end result, however, was that although there was sufficient land for the storage role, it was not large enough for the necessary domestic accommodation. The latter was then located at Bankstown airfield some five miles away.

3.

7. The airfield was acquired for the Department of Air in August 1940 and was occupied by the Royal Naval Fleet Air Arm during the war. Since April 1946 its domestic area has been occupied by No. 2 Stores Depot R.A.A.F. and although the airfield was transferred to the Department of Civil Aviation in February 1949, this arrangement has continued on a permissive occupancy basis only.

8. In July 1949 a site of some 18 acres suitable for domestic accommodation was acquired at Chester Hill  $2\frac{1}{4}$  road miles from the depot at Regents Park and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile in a direct line. Since that time, 21 flats for married officers and a house for the Commanding Officer have been erected. However, single personnel of No. 2 Stores Depot and other R.A.A.F. units in the Sydney area requiring living-in quarters are still quartered at Bankstown.

9. Functions No. 2 Stores Depot is one of the three major stores depots in the R.A.A.F., the other two being No. 1 Stores Depot Tottenham, Victoria and No. 7 Stores Depot Toowoomba, Queensland. It has an establishment of 33 officers, 487 O.R.s and 359 civilians, which includes those employed at the Ground Equipment Maintenance Section at Villawood some  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Regents Park.

10. As a stockholding depot, it is responsible for the receipt, storage, inspection, maintenance and distribution of bulk stocks of equipment except aircraft, aircraft engines, explosive stores and items normally supplied direct to R.A.A.F. units under period contract arrangements. It is also responsible for the provisioning of certain nominated ranges of equipment.

11. It is the specialist stores depot for the supply to all R.A.A.F. units of many items of technical equipment including spares for Caribou, Hercules, Iroquois and Mirage aircraft plus engine spares for Mystere 20 and Orion aircraft and guided missile spares and maintenance equipment. It also supplies

aerial pick-up, delivery and cargo tie-down equipment, marine and railway equipment, drafting, surveying and maintenance equipment, airfield construction equipment, communications equipment and spares and training devices.

12. No. 2 Stores Depot also has a regional responsibility for providing general equipment backing to R.A.A.F. units in New South Wales and motor transport for R.A.A.F. units in the Sydney area.

13. Besides providing domestic accommodation for its own members, the unit is also required to provide living-in accommodation for members of other R.A.A.F. units in the Sydney area which do not have their own facilities. Based on these commitments, the forecast requirement for sleeping accommodation is for 33 officers, 35 senior N.C.O.s and 231 O.R.s (males) and 5 officers, 10 senior N.C.O.s and 52 O.R.s (females), a total of 366.

14. No change is envisaged in the future role of No. 2 Stores Depot. It is expected to continue as a major store with accommodation responsibilities for the Sydney area.

15. Existing Facilities Single personnel of No. 2 Stores Depot and other R.A.A.F. units in the Sydney area who live in are accommodated at Bankstown airfield, some five road miles from the Regents Park depot, in temporary wartime constructed buildings. As Bankstown airport is now a major centre in the Australian light aircraft industry and the land occupied by the R.A.A.F. is required by the Department of Civil Aviation, it is proposed to construct new domestic, living and recreational facilities at the Chester Hill site. Up till now, 21 flats for married officers and accommodation for the Commanding Officer have been erected on the site.

NEED FOR THE PROPOSED FACILITIES

16. The sleeping, mess and recreational facilities at Bankstown are located in buildings of temporary wartime construction. They are generally timber framed huts with galvanised iron or asbestos cement wall cladding. They are obsolete, substandard, have become uneconomic to maintain and are not suitable for present needs. In addition, some facilities allowed in the Services' Scales and Standards of Accommodation do not exist. It can generally be said that these structures fall into the same class and condition of building which all branches of the Services have been progressively replacing with permanent construction in recent times.

17. After an inspection of the present buildings, the Committee found that there is a need for the facilities in this reference.

18. The proposals submitted to the Committee on this occasion represent the more immediate facilities required over the next three to four years by way of replacement of existing inadequate and unsatisfactory buildings. We noted that some additional works may be necessary in later years and that reference of these proposals to the Committee, if required, will occur when the need arises.

THE BUILDING PROPOSAL

19. Site The site at Chester Hill is in the Municipality of Bankstown, some 15 miles west of the Sydney G.P.O. It is bounded by Hector Street to the east, Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board land to the north, Priam Street to the west and the rear of the residences fronting Elliston Street to the south. It has an area of 18 acres 3 roods 6 perches.

20. A master plan for the development of the site has been agreed jointly by the Departments of Works and Air. The Committee noted that the sitings of the individual buildings in this reference accord with the agreed master plan

and are not likely to prejudice future development proposals. The Committee consider that the Chester Hill site is a suitable location for the residential accommodation of No. 2 Stores Depot R.A.A.F.

21. Layout The main internal road will come from Hector Street. It will divide the site, with the airmen's mess, quarters and recreation centre and W.R.A.A.F. quarters to the south and officers and senior N.C.O.s' mess and quarters and the barrack stores and transport group of buildings to the north. The western end of the site will be used principally for sporting facilities. The layout is functional and is arranged to minimise vehicular traffic in the main domestic areas.

22. Space has been allocated in the master plan for future development of sporting facilities, extensions of residential buildings and for the construction of a chapel.

23. Officers' Mess and Quarters The mess, which will cater for 43 officers will include a kitchen and associated areas, a dining room and bar, a games room, a T.V. room, an area for visitors and male and female toilets. The front entrance to the mess will be by a covered way leading through a landscaped area and a terrace. The adjoining two and three-storey sleeping wings will house up to 39 officers and be linked to the mess by a covered way. Each bedroom will be equipped with built-in furniture and laundry and boxroom facilities will be provided.

24. Senior N.C.O.s' Mess and Quarters Sleeping quarters and toilet facilities will be provided in two and three storey wings for 45 senior N.C.O.s and include ten bedrooms and associated toilet, laundry, boxroom and sitting room facilities for W.R.A.A.F. personnel. Once again, built-in furniture will be in accordance with normal standards. The adjoining mess will be connected

to the sleeping quarters by a covered way and the facilities which have been designed for 56 persons will include a dining room, kitchen areas, a bar, games room, a visitors' area and male and female toilets.

25.            W.R.A.A.F. Sleeping Quarters       This building will provide accommodation for 52 airwomen and is to include a recreation area, laundry, boxrooms and bathrooms. The building which will have a semi-enclosed landscaped court for outdoor living and a separate screened drying area will be linked to the proposed airmen's recreation centre and mess by a covered way.

26.            Airmen's Sleeping Quarters       A three-storey building will accommodate up to 234 airmen and will have toilets, boxrooms and laundries on each floor. Bedrooms will be equipped with built-in furniture and oriented away from the south and the adjacent private housing. The quarters will be connected to the airmen's recreation centre and mess by a covered way.

27.            Airmen's Mess and Recreation Centre       This single-storey complex will provide messing facilities for 300 airmen and airwomen close to their respective sleeping quarters. The complex will provide dining and food preparation space and equipment and ancillary areas. Wet and dry canteens and recreation facilities have been planned for some 250 personnel.

28.            Barracks Group, Stores, Ration Stores and Garages       The barracks group and ration store will comprise workshop, store and staff facilities and garaging for six service vehicles. The facilities will surround a service yard and will be located adjacent to the main gate.

29.            Gate Control Building       This building will include a check point/office, sleeping facilities for two guards and a toilet, kitchenette and detention room and will be located at the site's eastern point of entry.

30. Sporting Facilities A squash court and three illuminated tennis courts will be constructed to supplement the existing oval.

#### CONSTRUCTION

31. Design The buildings have been designed with a domestic scale and character, complementary to development in the neighbourhood and compatible with the function of the new complex. They have been designed and located to provide maximum privacy and minimum interference to adjoining properties.

32. Structure Generally, the buildings will be of brick load bearing construction with concrete floors and stairs. The mess buildings and recreation centre will have steel framing over larger roof spans. Roofs will be tiled except that flat roofs will have metal deck sheeting. Covered ways will be constructed with brick piers, timber and steel roof framing.

33. Finishes External walls generally will be face brick, window frames anodised aluminium, and doors and fascias will be timber.

34. Where appropriate to their function, internal walls will also be face brick. Walls in kitchens, toilets and similar areas will be tiled and elsewhere rendered and painted.

35. The floors of the kitchens, bars, lobbies and laundries will be surfaced with vitrified quarry tiles, whilst those of the service areas, boiler rooms and stores will have a granolithic finish. The dining rooms, bedroom areas, offices and recreation areas will have carpet or vinyl sheeting as appropriate. Toilet floors will be ceramic tiled.

36. Generally, ceilings will be finished with fibrous plaster but in special areas wood-fibre panels, asbestos cement or cement render will be used.

37. Mechanical Services Mechanical services include kitchen, refrigeration and laundry equipment, hot water convection heating of recreation rooms, exhaust ventilation in kitchens and toilets and reticulation of town gas to hot water boilers.

38. Electrical Services An electricity substation will be installed and street and security lighting will be provided. Sleeping quarters will be heated by electric infra-red strip heaters.

39. Hydraulic Services Stormwater, water and sewerage lines will be connected to the existing mains. A lawn and garden watering system will be installed.

40. Fire Protection Automatic thermal fire detectors will be provided throughout the complex and the alarms connected to a console in the guard house. Hydrants, hoses and extinguishers will be located as required by the fire authorities.

41. Roads and Parking The road system, car parking areas and service delivery points will be kerbed and guttered and surfaced with bituminous concrete. Uncovered parking will be provided for 300 cars.

42. Landscaping Landscaping will include lawns, trees and shrubs to provide screening, shelter and beautification. It will be integrated with footpaths, terraces and walling to provide pleasant living space.

43. Committee's Conclusion The Committee recommend the construction of the work in this reference.

ESTIMATE OF COST

44. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$2,950,000 made up as follows:

|                               | \$               |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Building works                | 2,330,000        |
| External engineering services | 620,000          |
|                               | <u>2,950,000</u> |

PROGRAMME

45. It is expected that after an approval to proceed is given, the preparation of final drawings and tender documents will take 14 months. Construction time for the work is estimated at 23 months after the contract is let.

SERVICES' SCALES AND STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION

46. The accommodation in this reference has been designed to comply with the Services' Scales and Standards of Accommodation.

47. In a number of other references examined recently the Committee has considered the standards and cost of living-in accommodation being provided for various Commonwealth authorities, other than the Services, and has found some apparent anomalies. Accordingly the Department of Works, as the Commonwealth's design authority, has been asked to make a study of the overall question of costs and standards of living-in accommodation. The result of this study and the conclusions to be drawn from it are not expected to be available for several months.

48. In view of the close attention given to the determination of the Services' Scales and Standards of Accommodation by the Services' departments,

we do not believe that there would be any immediate benefit to the present reference by deferring this report until after the Department of Works' study is completed. We would ask, however, that when the study is completed that it be examined by the Government to ascertain whether its conclusions might have profitable application to Services' Scales and Standards of Accommodation.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

49. The summary of recommendations and conclusions of the Committee is set out below. Alongside each is shown the paragraph in the report to which it refers.

#### Paragraph

- |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |    |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. | THE SLEEPING, MESS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES OF NO. 2 STORES DEPOT AT BANKSTOWN ARE OBSOLETE, SUBSTANDARD, HAVE BECOME UNECONOMIC TO MAINTAIN AND ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR PRESENT NEEDS.                                                              | 16 |
| 2. | THERE IS THEREFORE A NEED FOR THE FACILITIES IN THIS REFERENCE.                                                                                                                                                                                      | 17 |
| 3. | THE CHESTER HILL SITE IS A SUITABLE LOCATION FOR THE RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION OF NO. 2 STORES DEPOT R.A.A.F.                                                                                                                                        | 20 |
| 4. | THE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORK IN THIS REFERENCE.                                                                                                                                                                              | 43 |
| 5. | THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE WORK WHEN REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE WAS \$2,950,000.                                                                                                                                                                       | 44 |
| 6. | WHEN THE DEPARTMENT OF WORKS' STUDY ON COSTS AND STANDARDS OF LIVING-IN ACCOMMODATION IS COMPLETED, IT SHOULD BE EXAMINED TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER ITS CONCLUSIONS MIGHT HAVE PROFITABLE APPLICATION TO SERVICES' SCALES AND STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION. | 48 |

  
(C.R. Kelly)  
Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,  
Parliament House,  
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

7 April 1971.