

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

*1972—Parliamentary Paper No. 31*

*Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works*

## REPORT

relating to the proposed redevelopment of

# No. 2 STORES DEPOT, RAAF

at

# Regents Park, New South Wales

(SIXTH REPORT OF 1972)

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*Presented pursuant to Statute and  
ordered to be printed 26 April 1972*

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EXTRACTS FROM

THE JOURNALS OF THE SENATE

No. 149 DATED 24 FEBRUARY 1972

8. PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE—REFERENCE OF WORK: The Minister for Works (Senator Wright), pursuant to notice, moved—That, in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report: Re-development of No. 2 Stores Depot, RAAF Regents Park, New South Wales.

Senator Wright presented plans in connection with the proposed work.

Question—put and passed.

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## WITNESSES

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## *Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works*

### No. 2 STORES DEPOT, RAAF REGENTS PARK, N.S.W.

# REPORT

By resolution on 24 February 1972, the Senate referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report to the Parliament, the proposal for the redevelopment of No. 2 Stores Depot, RAAF Regents Park, 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:

- a warehouse building with an office annexe;
- a guardhouse and control point; and
- alterations to an existing stores building.

2. It also includes associated engineering services, roadworks and a car park and demolition of a number of existing buildings.

3. The work was estimated to cost \$3.4m.

#### THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

4. The Committee received written submissions and drawings from the Departments of Air and Works and the Municipality of Auburn and took evidence from their representatives at a public hearing in Canberra. We inspected existing storage facilities and stores handling procedures at Regents Park and the sites for the proposed new development.

#### No. 2 STORES DEPOT, RAAF

5. *History* No. 2 Stores Depot RAAF was formed in July 1940 and originally occupied 6 factory buildings at Waterloo, New South Wales. By late 1943, due to wartime expansion, the depot occupied 10 sites in Waterloo, Rosebery and Alexandria. In May 1946, the RAAF acquired an area of land together with stores buildings at Regents Park which had formerly been used as a United States Army subsistence depot. By August 1946, Headquarters No. 2 Stores Depot became consolidated at Regents Park as the main RAAF stores holding site for New South Wales.

6. *Site* The Regents Park site is located 13 miles west of the Sydney metropolitan area in the Municipality of Auburn. It covers an area of approximately 117 acres and is bounded by Kirkham Street to the north, Landsborough Street and Chisholm Road to the west, a Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board pipeline easement to the south and a number of industrial buildings and storage areas to the east. The entrance to the site is off Rose Crescent alongside the MWSDB pipeline easement. The site is served by a standard gauge railway spur and is crossed by a number of easements for electric power transmission lines and sewerage and stormwater drainage.

7. The depot also occupies sites at Bankstown airfield and Chester Hill where domestic accommodation is provided for depot personnel and at Villawood where the Ground Equipment Maintenance Squadron is located.

8. All domestic accommodation will eventually be located at the Chester Hill site, 2½ road miles from the depot. A number of flats for married officers and accommodation for the Commanding Officer have been erected and construction is now under way on messing, sleeping and recreation facilities for officers, NCOs and other ranks, and support services to replace obsolete and substandard buildings at Bankstown. The construction of the new buildings and services was recommended by the Committee in a report to the Parliament on 20 April 1971.

9. *Functions and Facilities* No. 2 Stores Depot is one of three major stores depots in the RAAF, the other 2 being No. 1 Stores Depot, Tottenham, Victoria and No. 7 Stores Depot, Toowoomba, Queensland. No. 2 Depot is the only RAAF unit located at Regents Park. It has an establishment of 33 officers, 490 other ranks and 358 civilians including depot personnel employed at the Ground Equipment Maintenance Squadron at Villawood about 3½ miles from Regents Park.

10. It is both a stockholding and specialist stores depot. 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 to RAAF units under period contract arrangements.

11. As a specialist store, it supplies all RAAF units with many items of technical equipment including all spares for Caribou, Hercules, Iroquois and Mirage aircraft plus engine spares for Mystere and Orion aircraft and guided missile spares and maintenance equipment. It is also the specialist depot for aerial pick-up, delivery and cargo tie-down equipment, marine equipment, drafting, surveying and maintenance equipment, airfield construction plant and communications equipment, spares and training devices. In addition, the depot has a regional responsibility for providing general equipment backing to RAAF units in New South Wales. Motor transport provided to meet the requirements of RAAF units in the Sydney area is also based on the depot.

12. The depot has 15 warehouses with a total floor space of 620,000 sq ft. About 440,000 sq ft is in timber framed fibro-cement clad buildings which were erected by the US Forces as a temporary measure during World War II for ration storage purposes.

13. A small temporary building serves as a guardhouse and control point at the main entrance off Rose Crescent.

#### **THE NEED FOR THE PROPOSED WORK**

14. The Committee were told that the range and volume of equipment and activities at the depot have increased over recent years as a result of the RAAF's re-equipment programme. It is expected that the present high level of equipment transactions will be maintained or possibly increased in future years. The depot is considered by the RAAF to be well located with respect to the various units it serves and also in relation to the numerous and diverse industries which supply it. It is adequately serviced by rail and road transport and is located close to main transport routes, in particular, the Hume Highway and the main southern railway.

15. We were informed that no change is envisaged in the future role of the depot, nor is it planned that any other RAAF unit will be located there.

16. At the site inspection, we noted that the warehouses of World War II origin have closely spaced internal columns which do not

allow the adoption of effective modern storage and handling techniques and the space that is available cannot be used efficiently. Currently, these buildings account for some 70 per cent of available storage space. We were told that because of their age, the buildings are costly to maintain and keep properly waterproofed. It is considered that they represent an uneconomical utilisation of a valuable site.

17. It was noted that provision of new warehouses would enable the RAAF to take advantage of modern developments in storage and handling methods and stores control procedures at No. 2 Stores Depot. It would allow for future computerisation if required. It has been calculated that the provision of the single warehouse in this proposal would result in substantial savings in operating costs sufficient to recover the building's capital cost in about 11 years.

18. *The Committee's Conclusion* It was the conclusion of the Committee that No. 2 Stores Depot, Regents Park is well located to carry out its functions but the wartime buildings being used for storage and administrative purposes are no longer suitable for present and future needs. We therefore found that there is a need for the work in this reference.

#### **THE BUILDING PROPOSAL**

19. *Present and Planned Layout* A master plan for the redevelopment of the depot has been agreed jointly by the Departments of Air and Works and the buildings proposed in this reference are sited in accordance with this plan. The buildings are required to meet the more immediate needs of the depot and form one component of a programme to progressively replace unsuitable storage buildings by modern warehouses to be sited in accordance with the master plan.

20. The Committee were informed that the New South Wales Department of Main Roads is planning to construct a major limited access road through the southern edge of the depot and alongside the pipeline easement. A 200 ft strip of land along the southern edge of the depot has been indicated on the master plan for this purpose. As this new road will prevent access to the depot through the present entrance, the plan provides for its relocation off Chisholm Road. Construction of the new entrance and control point is thus included in this reference.

## CONSTRUCTION

21. *Warehouse* This large building, 800 ft long by 200 ft wide and 40 ft high, will receive and hold bulk stocks and provide for checking, maintaining and making up orders from stock for distribution to various centres. The building will be divided into 4 separate storage compartments, each of which is isolated by concrete fire walls and fire doors. Three compartments will be used for conventional storage and the fourth will handle high density storage. Storage areas will be linked by a continuous semi-automatic conveyor system for the distribution of stores to and from a receipt and despatch area in an adjacent building. Goods may also be transported and distributed by forklift trucks using the perimeter aisles. The high density storage area will be serviced by manually operated stacker/retriever machines which are capable of stacker/retriever machines which are capable of stacking 2,000 lb pallets on shelving up to 40 ft high. A pneumatic tube system will link with the office annexe control room which is in direct contact with the unit headquarters. The building has been sited and planned to allow for its future extension if required.

22. A 2-storey office annexe to the main store is to provide offices, toilets and staff rooms for those employed in the warehouse. Amenities will include locker, change and lunch rooms for both service and civilian staff. The annexe will also house 3 special storage areas to accommodate electronic equipment, valuable and attractive items and secret equipment.

23. *Guardhouse and Control Point* This building will provide administrative offices for service police and the civilian staff section, gate control, baggage room and sleeping and toilet facilities for persons on duty outside normal working hours. Garage space will be provided for an ambulance and a fire tender.

24. *Alterations to Building No. 66* Building No. 66 which is adjacent to the site of the proposed warehouse will be linked to it by a covered way and an extension of the warehouse conveyor system. It will then become a receipts and despatch centre.

25. *Demolitions* A number of buildings including a storehouse (which are no longer required or which are in the way of the proposed warehouse) and the guardhouse will be demolished.

26. *Warehouse* This building will be constructed on a relatively level site. It will be of steel frame construction on reinforced concrete piers and have concrete floors. The roof and walls will be sheeted with shaped galvanised steel which will be insulated with foil-faced fibreglass. In the bulk storage areas, the roof will be supported by steel trusses bearing on columns or the fire-walls and spaced on a grid of 66 ft by 88 ft. The roof over the high density storage areas will be supported by a storage rack structure which also supports the stores containers. Ventilating ridges and roof vents will be provided to exhaust smoke in the event of fire.

27. Some natural roof lighting will be provided by the use of translucent roof sheeting but the main illumination will be provided by continuous rows of industrial fluorescent light fittings mounted between shelves and racks, where necessary on 2 levels. Security lighting will be provided over all doorways. Where forklift trucks manoeuvre the external wall cladding will be protected by a steel crash barrier.

28. The office annexe will be of 2-storey steel frame construction with face brickwork, concrete floors, aluminium frame windows and a galvanised metal roof insulated with foil-faced fibreglass. Internal floors will be vinyl covered except for toilet and shower areas which will be ceramic tiled and the stores areas which will be of concrete. Internal walls generally will be cement rendered and painted. Toilet and shower walls will be tiled.

29. *Guardhouse and Control Point* The 2-storey guard house will be of load bearing brick wall construction with concrete floors, aluminium framed windows and a tiled roof. Generally, internal floors will be covered with vinyl and toilets and shower areas will be ceramic tiled. Garages will have concrete floors. Internal walls will be cement rendered and painted except for the toilets and shower areas which will be ceramic tiled. A control point to be constructed on a traffic island in the centre of the main entrance road directly opposite the guardhouse will be a light framed aluminium structure, half glazed and with a flat galvanised metal roof. Boom gates will be provided for traffic control and new security gates and fences will be provided where necessary.

30. *Electrical Services* High voltage electricity supply will be taken underground to a 1,000 kVA transformer to be installed in a new substation near the warehouse. Medium voltage supply will then be provided at the main switchboard in the warehouse.

31. *Fire Protection* The warehouse and office annexe will be provided with push-button alarm points and an early warning fire detector system. The guardhouse will be provided with thermal fire detectors and push-button alarm points. A new area fire alarm system will be installed consisting of underground control cables linking alarm points with the guardhouse where the main fire alarm console will be located.

32. In addition, the warehouse will be protected with an automatic sprinkler system, hydrants and hose reels, smoke vents, automatic air inlet vents and draught curtains. Other protection measures will include sprinklers and fire extinguishers in the office annexe, thermal fire detectors, fire extinguishers, push-buttons and bells in the guardhouse.

33. *External Hydraulic Services* An elevated 20,000 gallon water tank will be provided for domestic, industrial and fire protection requirements. The fire hydrant supply will be supplemented by booster pumps and 2 ground level water storage tanks each of 300,000 gallons capacity. Other services will include supplementary stormwater and sewage reticulation.

34. *Mechanical Services* The warehouse will be provided with 2 manually operated stacker retriever units and one transfer car in the high density storage area, a pneumatic tube communication system and an in-floor chain drive system for conveyor carts. Vehicular entry to the warehouse will be by way of 3 motorised external folding doors.

35. Hot water will be reticulated as required, and kitchen equipment will be provided in both the office annexe and the guardhouse. Forced ventilation will be provided where necessary and some minor special storage areas will be air conditioned for the protection of sensitive items. Motorised boom gates will be provided each side of the control point on the entrance road.

36. *Road Works and Landscaping* A dual carriageway entrance road will be constructed from Chisholm Road. It will incorporate a traffic island for the control point and holding bay for traffic entering from Chisholm Road.

A 24 ft wide road and a car park to accommodate 5 cars will be provided along the southern end of the new warehouse. All roads will be bituminous concrete surfaced and kerbed and guttered. The areas around the new buildings and the entrance will be suitably landscaped.

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

#### ESTIMATE OF COST

38. The estimated cost of the work was \$3.4m which is based on December 1971 prices. We were informed at the hearing in March 1972 that due to price increases in the various labour and material components the estimate of cost at that time was \$3.5m.

39. On the basis of the December 1971 prices, the estimate of cost is made up as follows:

|  | \$        |
|--|-----------|
| Building works and associated services . . . . . | 2,720,000 |
| External engineering services                    | 680,000   |
|  | 3,400,000 |

#### PROGRAMME

40. It is expected that after approval to proceed is given preparation of final drawings and tender documents will take 12 months. The estimated time for construction of the proposed work is 18 months after acceptance of a tender.

#### REPRESENTATIONS BY MUNICIPALITY OF AUBURN

41. The Committee received representations from the Municipal Council of Auburn concerning a number of matters relating to the immediate and future development of the depot. The Council was particularly concerned that the proposals be compatible with its criteria for town planning, off street parking and general development of industrial sites.

42. Specifically, the Council recommended that the guardhouse be relocated to provide standing space at the entrance for vehicles so as to avoid queuing and consequently traffic congestion in Chisholm Road and sought



assurances that sufficient off street parking space would be provided and that the storm-water drainage system would be adequate.

43. The Committee were told by departmental representatives that the most recent plans (which had not been seen by Council officers) provided for the construction of a 100 ft long vehicular holding bay at the entrance, on Commonwealth property and along the Chisholm Road frontage. The intention of this work is to provide sufficient standing space for vehicles waiting to enter the depot area from Chisholm Road without impinging on the carriageway. It was stated that the detailed design of this facility which is part of the present reference would be developed in consultation with Council officers.

44. Council officers expressed their satisfaction with the arrangements for the detailed design of the stormwater drainage and with the plan to provide additional off street car parking areas once land within the depot becomes available. The area proposed for a car park is occupied by stores buildings required until the proposed warehouse is constructed.

45. We were assured that as further development of the depot is planned, full consideration will be given to the Council's other requirements.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

46. 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.

|  | <i>Paragraph</i> |
|--|------------------|
| 1. No. 2 Stores Depot RAAF Regents Park is well located to carry out its functions ..                    | 18               |
| 2. The wartime buildings being used for storage and administrative purposes are no longer suitable .. .. | 18               |
| 3. There is a need for the work in this reference .. ..  | 18               |
| 4. The Committee recommend the construction of the work in this reference .. ..                          | 37               |
| 5. The estimated cost of the work was \$3.4m .. ..   | 38               |

C. R. KELLY  
Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee  
on Public Works,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra, A.C.T.  
20 April 1972.