

HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY SUMMARY – MILTON HILL, CLAPHAM

Wardell Armstrong LLP (WA) was commissioned to undertake a Heritage Statement to support the promotion of a new housing development within the Neighbourhood Development Plan, for a site at Milton Hill, Clapham, Bedfordshire. This document provides a summary of the heritage works undertaken and an overview of the findings and recommendations from the assessment.

In order to inform this assessment, baseline data was obtained from the following:

- Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) consulted February 2019;
- Bedfordshire Archives;
- Historic England datasets (2020) - Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Registered Battlefields.

In addition, two walkover surveys of the site have been undertaken, in May 2018 and October 2019.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF SITE

The site is located on a slight south-facing slope within the Great Ouse river valley. The Ouse valley is notable for its river gravels, which have been subject to extraction from the post medieval period onwards.

DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

A designated heritage asset is defined as *“A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.”* (National Planning Policy Framework 2019). Designation highlights a building, site or area's special interest and value to this and future generations and gives it protection under law and/ or policy.

There are no designated heritage assets located within the boundary of the site. Therefore no designated heritage assets would be physically affected by the proposed development.

Within 1km of the Site, there are two Scheduled Monuments, one Grade I Listed Building and twelve Grade II Listed Buildings. The majority of these assets are located within the village of Oakley to the west of the site, with two assets located to the north.

Potential effects to designated heritage assets as a consequence of potential change within their settings were also assessed. It was concluded that due to the intervening topography and vegetation, and a lack of historic and functional associations, the site does not contribute to the setting of any of the designated heritage assets within the search area. As such, the proposed development would not impact upon their overall significance.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Non-designated heritage assets represent the remainder of the heritage resource which are not designated heritage assets and which generally include entries onto a historic environment record or sites and monument record (archaeological remains and areas of archaeological interest, archaeological finds, buildings, structures, parks, gardens and cemeteries) and previously unknown features which may be recorded during the course of data collection in respect to a given development proposal. These are protected under planning policy only.

A review of data supplied by the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) shows the following non-designated heritage assets within the site:

- a cropmark enclosure recorded within the north of the site (HER reference 16562); and
- cropmarks and remains of trackway ditches recorded in the south of the site (HER reference 16563).

In addition, a Roman Road may partially extend into the far southern corner of the site, although its route is contested (HER reference 10459).

Cropmarks in fields could indicate the presence of buried archaeological remains. Based on its form, the cropmark enclosure recorded in the site could date to the Iron Age period. Whilst, archaeological fieldwork undertaken in 2000 for the construction of the nearby A6 Bypass failed to confirm its presence, this comprised non-intrusive evaluation only (fieldwalking and geophysical survey).

Conversely the cropmarks of trackway ditches within the south of the site were confirmed through excavation as part of the archaeological investigation during the construction of the A6 Bypass in 2000. This recorded the remains of a trackway, aligned east-north-east to west-south-west

Whilst there is a potential for associated buried archaeological remains to be present within the boundary of the Site, there is no evidence to indicate that any archaeological remains within the site, if present, would be of high (national) significance, as defined by the NPPF.

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

A geophysical survey of the Site was undertaken in September 2020, which identified features which have likely archaeological origin.

Within the northern part of the Site, the results of the survey were indicative of archaeological settlement and/ or agricultural enclosures and likely corresponds with the prehistoric enclosure cropmarks identified through aerial photography. In the south of the Site, features were recorded within the area of the post medieval trackway ditches and could be associated remains.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Information was gathered from the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record, Historic England data sets, Bedfordshire Archives and a site walkover survey. This showed that there are no designated heritage assets recorded within the site. In addition, it is concluded that there would be no change within the settings of nearby designated heritage assets which would affect their overall significance. There would be no harm to designated heritage assets.

In respect of non-designated heritage assets, whilst Bedfordshire HER records evidence for possible Iron Age, Roman and post medieval activity within the site boundary, it is considered unlikely that there are remains of high (national) importance located within the site which would preclude development. This is verified, in part, by the previous archaeological fieldwork undertaken within the site during the A6 Clapham Bypass which did not identify any archaeological remains which would preclude development.

The strength of the geophysical responses in the northern and southern areas of the Site suggest that the potential for archaeology within these areas is high. However, there was a lack of geophysical responses in the central area of the Site, which is unlikely to be caused by ploughing and suggest the potential for archaeology within this area is low.

Discussions with the Archaeology Officer at Bedford Borough Council are currently taking place regarding the scope and timings of further archaeological investigation.