

**MK0255 FORMER FACCENDA CHICKEN FARM, WENDLEBURY ROAD,  
BICESTER**

**ADDENDUM UPDATED NOTES TO WSI**

Following Albion Land's decision to re-design the site layout at their development on the Former Faccenda Chicken Farm site on Wendlebury Road, Bicester, to include raising construction levels to avoid impacts on the archaeology, a site meeting was held comprising of Richard Oram (OCC), Bill Bailey (client's chief design engineer) and Richard Greatorex of Cotswold Archaeology. The meeting was held to allow the client's design team to explain that their re-design would mean raising impact levels by a further 250mm, effectively removing any impact by the design on the archaeology. The client also wanted to explore the possibility of mapping and then preserving at least some, if not all, the archaeological potential across the site *in situ*. The client accepted however that there would be minimal impact as a result of having to strip the site of overburden, down to natural ahead of re-filling the site with a mix of materials to raise ground levels through which to cut the proposed wide shallow foundations. The plan would be to cover remains with terram, soft fill, and then brash/Type 1 over. Even attenuation levels/depths have been raised to avoid impact. Richard Oram noted the client's efforts to avoid impact on significant remains, but explained, that as the site was to be exposed to the elements, in order to complete the site wide strip of overburden, he would require the site's archaeology to be sampled and recorded. Albion Land have now provided full details of their development proposals/impact levels on the site (see plan and sections attached).

Richard Oram did however agree that the Roman structures built of stone foundation could be preserved *in situ* and the walls would not need dismantling as part of the recording process. He would require however, some investigation in the center of the structure to ascertain its usage etc. He would agree a lower level of sampling of the roadside and enclosure ditches especially in the eastern half of the site and especially those ditch systems which continued/extended southwards from the Catalyst site.

The south-west corner of the site is located on a gravel spit and therefore dry until the water table which is encountered between 63m aOD – 63.20maOD. This means that excavation within this part of the footprint will be more effective in comparison to excavating on the far less well draining silt/clays of the majority of the reminder of the site to the east. In terms of the circular structure, it has been agreed with Richard Oram, that a small rubber tracked machine will be deployed to carefully peel back 20<sup>th</sup> century foundation disturbance which has

truncated its north-western quarter to reveal the circuit wall and floor layers in profile. In addition to the stone structures, ditch sequences, fence alignments, post holes and small pits in the south-west corner of the site will also be carefully excavated and documented, in order to establish the phases of development, re-development and abandonment on the site. To the north and east, where evidence of occupation becomes more occasional and dispersed, recording of ditches will focus on investigating intersection of ditches to establish sequence, rather than percentages. Those ditches that extend from the Catalyst Development southwards into the site, where we already have good dating evidence, Richard Oram has agreed need not be sampled, *except* where they intersect with other ditches in the current site. Note the topography drops the further the development footprint extends eastwards into the floodplain, and in these areas, machine excavation for ditch slots maybe necessary (due to the height of the water table and the different natural). As the eastern area of the site will be protected by an even greater depth of fill, Richard Oram agreed interventions could be kept to the minimum, and aimed at further establishing/confirming the sequence and dating of the drainage network. The number and range of archaeological features decreases dramatically to the north and east of the ditched enclosure surrounding the circular structure.

Note even in the current dry weather, on the gravel spit in the south-west corner, the water table lies at a maximum of 60cm below the stripped level. Pumps will be supplied by the client to aid recording of features that extend to a depth beyond the level of the water table.

### **Addendum Update**

As stripping of the overburden has progressed eastwards, various areas have been identified as being contaminated with asbestos and/or heavily truncated by concrete foundations. These are generally in areas where, there are few if any ditch systems and any remains predominantly comprise tree throws and very large gravel pits. It is therefore recommended that despite ongoing clearance of the contaminated areas that further archaeological monitoring/mapping and selected recording should cease in the eastern extent of the site and other contaminated areas and be restricted to the areas surrounding the pond.

It has been established that the pond is at least 3m deep and in places known to be 3.5m deep. Since the deepest features on the Catalyst site to the north were a maximum of 2m deep, it is accepted that no archaeological features will survive in the base of the pond, and therefore will require no recording. In order to strip the areas surrounding the pond safely and to avoid machinery slipping into the pond it is recommended on Health and Safety grounds

that the pond be completely drained, backfilled with compacted materials (to allow for settling) up to current ground level. The surrounding areas will be stripped once the alignment of the foul sewer has been 'staked out' and an avoidance corridor flagged 3m either side (Thames Water requirement). The upcast material from the remaining areas to be stripped will be stored on top of the backfilled pond. Note that to the east of the pond it is possible that an area of known contamination may extend westwards and this area may also have to be abandoned for archaeological recording. Mapping and selected recording will be undertaken in the uncontaminated areas surrounding the pond.

Once the areas contaminated with asbestos have been removed, those uncontaminated areas in the east where mapping has already taken place, but where minimal recording (cut and fill records and dating collection) is still required, will be completed before these areas can be backfilled.

### **Addendum Update 2**

To the east of the area of highest potential (SW corner over the Roundhouse and rectilinear structure (possible mithraeum), it has been established that part of the new build will have to be formed of piled construction (see Figure 1). As this will inevitably involve impact on areas not previously anticipated, further mitigation beyond that already agreed above will need to be considered. Figure 1 identifies the pile locations and highlighted are those which we feel should be investigated, to either provide more dating evidence of the Roman ditch/de-watering network or provide more characterisation of the large gravel pits which are more prevalent in the eastern part of the development footprint. These areas had already been covered and backfilled for preservation *in situ*, so the overburden will have to be removed once more to allow a safe working area in each case. Note the floor design comprises a raised/suspended floor and will not impact any archaeological deposits.

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