



**Symmetry Park,  
Bicester, Phase 3**

**Written Scheme of  
Investigation for an  
Archaeological and  
Heritage Assessment**

Prepared by:  
**The Environmental Dimension  
Partnership Ltd**

On behalf of:  
**Tritax Big Box Developments**

November 2024

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## **APPENDICES**

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## Section 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), on behalf of Tritax Big Box Developments (hereafter referred to as 'the Client') for approval by the archaeological advisor to Cherwell District Council (CDC).
- 1.2 The document sets out the methodologies to be employed in the preparation of a desk-based Archaeological and Heritage Assessment (hereafter referred to as a 'the assessment') for Phase 3 of the Symmetry Park project at Bicester, Oxfordshire (hereafter known as 'the site'). The Site's location is shown in **Appendix EDP 1**.
- 1.3 This document sets out the methodologies to be employed in the preparation of an Archaeological and Heritage Assessment. The aim of the proposed assessment is to assess the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment which has the potential to be affected by the proposed development. The assessment will accompany a planning application for a proposed commercial development within the Site.
- 1.4 The assessment will address the relevant policies contained within the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* (MHCLG, 2023), revised December 2023, and local policies within the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted July 2015) (CDCNO, 2015).
- 1.5 The report will take into account the additional planning guidance for enhancing and conserving the historic environment as set out in the *Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)* revised February 2024 (MHCLG, 2024), and best practices set out in relevant Historic England advice notes.
- 1.6 The assessment will also conform to additional guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment contained in the *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2020), as well as guidance set out in the *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Guidance Document - April 2024* produced by OCC's county archaeological services (OCC, 2024).

### SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.7 The Site is located to the east of Graven Hill, Bicester, adjacent to the north side of the A41, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 460693, 220620. It is approximately c.7.3 hectares (ha) in extent. The Site comprises an area of undeveloped agricultural land and associated hedgerow boundaries, divided internally by east-west wired fence lines into three fields. The exception to this is a small compound comprised of a group of modern c.1990s farm buildings, constructed from timber, concrete, steel framed and corrugated sheet roofs. The compound is in the far north-east corner of the Site. In addition, the Site boundary includes an access road to the A41 on its western side, through the existing phases of the adjacent Symmetry Park commercial development.

- 1.8 The Site's agricultural land (i.e. three fields) is bound on all four sides by hedgerows, with fields located beyond to the north, Bicester Caravan & Leisure site, L.C. Hughes Metal Recycling site and fields to the east, A41 and fields to the south and existing phases of Symmetry Park, Bicester to the west. The western access road within the Site is bound by the modern commercial development of Symmetry Park and the A41 at its southern end.
- 1.9 Topographically, the Site is relatively uniform and sits at c.66m Ordnance Datum (aOD). The British Geological Survey (BGS) records the Site's underlying solid geology as mudstone, associated with the Peterborough Member. No superficial geological deposits are recorded within the Site (BGS, 2024). Additionally, the BGS records no geotechnical borehole data within the Site (*ibid*).

## Section 2 Methodology

- 2.1 The report will be produced in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2020) as well as the *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Guidance Document - April 2024* produced by Oxford County Council (OCC) county archaeological services (OCC, 2024). The CIfA guidelines provide a national standard for the completion of desk-based assessments, while the OCC guidelines provide a county wide standard for the completion of desk-based assessments within the Local Planning Authority (LPA) boundary of OCC.
- 2.2 The assessment will use a 1km radius from the site boundary as a study area for its consideration of potential physical effects on heritage assets. A broader study area will be adopted for the evaluation of potential effects upon the setting of designated heritage assets.
- 2.3 The assessment will involve the consultation of readily available archaeological and historical information from documentary, cartographic, aerial photographic and LiDAR sources. The principal sources of information will comprise:
- Information held by the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) on known archaeological sites, monuments and findspots, within the vicinity of the Site. Also, information from the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character study, National Mapping Program and Portable Antiquity Scheme (if available);
  - Fieldwork reports from investigations within the Site;
  - Information on the British Geological Society online maps;
  - Maps and documents held by the Oxfordshire History Centre and online sources, including all editions of the Ordnance Survey;
  - Available LiDAR coverage of the Site and its environs;
  - The National Heritage List for England curated by English Heritage; and
  - Aerial photographs held by the Historic England Archive.
- 2.4 The information gathered from these sources will be complemented by a site walkover. This walkover will consider the nature and significance of known and/or potential archaeological assets within the Site, identify visible historic features, and assess possible factors which may affect the survival or condition of known or potential assets. The site walkover will also consider, where appropriate, the contribution made by the land within the site to the settings of heritage assets situated within its wider zone of influence and the value of the historic landscape resource more generally.

- 2.5 A report will be produced which will provide a synthesis of relevant information for the application site and thereafter will conclude with: (1) an assessment of its likely archaeological potential, made with regard to current best practice guidelines; and (2) an assessment of the likely effect of the proposed development upon designated assets. With regard to (2) above, the assessment process will be undertaken with reference to the Historic England guidance *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second edition)* (HE, 2017) and 'Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' (HE 2019).

## **Section 3**

### **Report Content**

3.1 The report structure will be dependent on the findings of the research, the needs of the project, and the stage within the planning process. The report will, as a minimum, contain the following sections:

- Non-technical summary;
- Introduction;
- Context of project;
- Site location and description;
- Geological and topographical description;
- Aims and purpose of the assessment;
- Methodology;
- Baseline archaeological and heritage information presented as a period-based archaeological and historical background, consisting of:
  - i. Designated heritage assets;
  - ii. Non-designated heritage assets;
  - iii. Cartographic, aerial photographic and LiDAR evidence (if data is available to a sufficient resolution to be useful for the purposes of the assessment); and
  - iv. Site walkover.
- Assessment of the potential for archaeological remains within the site considering previous/known impacts;
- Assessment of the potential physical impact of the proposed development on the significance of archaeological remains within the site;
- Assessment of the potential effect on the significance of designated heritage assets through changes to their settings;
- Conclusions;
- Supporting data in appendices, as necessary;
- References; and



- Supporting illustrations, including reproduction of relevant HER data, LiDAR data (where available), and historic maps.
- 3.2 Provided that there are no issues of commercial confidentiality, a copy of the archaeological and heritage assessment will be submitted to the Oxfordshire HER. Considering the standard process of client review and editing, this will most likely be broadly contemporary with the submission of the planning application.

## **Section 4**

### **References**

British Geological Survey. (2024). *Geology Viewer*. Retrieved from British Geological Survey: <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

ClfA. (2014). *Standards and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment*. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

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UK Government. (2023). *Revised National Planning Policy Framework*. Retrieved from gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>

## **Appendix EDP 1 Site Location Plan**



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COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
LAND ADJACENT TO SYMMETRY PARK  
BICESTER - PHASE 3

PHASE 3 - SITE LOCATION PLANNING BOUNDARIES

PL02: Unit references amended. WE.	19.11.24. RM.
PL01: Planning Issue. WE.	22.10.24. RM.
R02: General update. WE.	18.08.24. WE.
P01: First Issue. WE.	03.07.24. WE.
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Drawn by:	WE
Checked by:	RM
Scale @ A1:	1:2000
Date:	MAY 2024
CAD ref:	4036-X3-001
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Rev:	PL02
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