



B. Design Brief

Graven Hill, MOD Bicester, Bicester

Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation

1. SUMMARY OF BRIEF:

1.1 This brief provides the outline framework on which a detailed specification of work should be based. It is advisable that archaeological organisations forward the specification to the County Archaeological Officer or his representative for validation before submitting costed proposals to the agency commissioning the evaluation. Sections 1 – 4 of this brief relate specifically to this evaluation. Annex 1-5 provides the archaeological contractor with a procedural framework outlining general good practice and requirements pertaining to all archaeological evaluation projects carried out in Oxfordshire.

1.2 Planning permission has been granted from Cherwell District Council for development on the site. Due to the potential for archaeological deposits to be present a condition has been attached to the planning permission requiring a programme of archaeological investigation ahead of the development.

This brief sets out the first stage of the investigation, an archaeological field evaluation. Further mitigation may be required, depending on the results of the evaluation, which will be detailed in a subsequent brief.

This brief also contains details for an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken during a series of geotechnical test pits.

1.3 The evaluation will aim to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological deposits within the area affected by invasive development. This evidence will form the basis of any proposals for appropriate mitigation measures that may seek to limit the damage to significant archaeological deposits, and should aim to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further investigation be required. The evaluation will include any post-excavation work and publication requirements resulting from it.

2. BACKGROUND:

2.1 Site Location and Description

2.1.1 The site is located on the North side of Banbury and to the south of Hanwell (SP 5862 2076). The site lies at approximately 70m above OD and the underlying geology is shown as Peterborough Mudstone to the south and Kellaway sandstone to the north. The site is currently in commercial use by the MOD.

2.2 Planning Background

2.2.1 Planning permission has been granted by Cherwell District Council for the redevelopment of a number of MOD sites within the Bicester area. This includes the redevelopment of the former MOD sites including demolition of existing buildings, development of 1900 homes and the construction of a number of commercial premises and infrastructure (11/01494/OUT). Due to the potential disturbance of

below ground archaeological features two conditions requiring a programme of archaeological investigation has been attached to the planning permission.

2.2.2 Condition 71 requires that a written scheme of investigation (WSI) is approved in advance of the commencement of the development. The WSI will need to detail the evaluation required on all areas of the development as well as contain provision for a later stage written scheme covering any subsequent mitigation. This brief sets out the requirements for this evaluation and a watching brief for a series of geotechnical test pits only. Subsequent mitigation will need to be detailed in a separate brief following the evaluation stage and will require a separate written scheme.

2.2.3 Condition 72 requires that the archaeological investigations are undertaken in accordance with the WSI approved under Condition 72. This condition will be discharged once all parts of the staged programme of investigation have been completed and an acceptable report submitted and agreed by us on behalf of Cherwell District Council.

2.3 **Archaeological Background**

2.3.1 The area concerned lies within an area of some archaeological interest with Graven Hill itself located approximately 500m east of the Roman Town of Alchester (SM 18). The line of the Roman Road from the town to Verulamium is thought to cross the northern side of Graven Hill. Evidence for Roman and Saxon settlement of the area has been recorded in a number of locations around the site. A geophysical survey of the Graven Hill site recorded a number of possible archaeological features including ditches, a trackway and a possible ring gully (EOX 2987). The development at Graven Hill is therefore likely to encounter further archaeological deposits related to this period.

3. **REQUIREMENT FOR WORK:**

3.1 This field evaluation has been required in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) because of the presence of known sites of archaeological interest within the immediate vicinity of the development. Should important archaeological remains be revealed, this evaluation will form the first stage of a mitigation procedure.

3.2 The evaluation should aim to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within those areas affected. The evaluation report produced will present a digest of information on the character and significance of the deposits under review and this report will form the basis of any proposals for appropriate further action. The evaluation should also aim to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

3.3 Any mitigation resulting from the evaluation report will seek to limit the damage to significant archaeological deposits. The developer will be responsible for accommodating the archaeological remains by:-

a) Physical preservation in situ, which can often be achieved through design adaptations, or, if this is not possible;

- b) By preserving the archaeology on record through a full recording action. Less significant archaeological deposits may be dealt with through a monitoring and recording exercise carried out during the construction programme.

4. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

Trenched Evaluation

- 4.1 For the areas that have been subject to a geophysical survey a trenching sample equivalent to approximately 2% of the site area should be undertaken within the area of the proposed site. The trenching should target geophysical anomalies as well as any blank areas. For the areas that have not been subject to this geophysical survey a trenching sample equivalent to approximately 3% of the site area should be undertaken within the area of the proposed site.

A trench location plan should be agreed in advance of the trenching following the submission of the geophysical survey results. Provision should be made for taking environmental/organic samples.

- 4.2 The excavation under the supervision of a competent archaeologist is to be taken down to the top of 'natural' or the top of any significant archaeological level, whichever is the higher. While the surface of the exposed archaeological horizon should be cleaned for the purpose of clarifying the remains, archaeological features should generally only be sampled sufficiently to characterise and date them. Full excavation of features should not be undertaken at this stage. Care should be taken not to damage archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation.

Watching Brief for Geotechnical Test Pits.

- 4.3 An watching brief will be permanently maintained during the excavation of geotechnical test pits. The watching brief should provide an opportunity, if needed, for the engaged archaeological organisations to signal, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

Provision should be made for taking environmental/organic samples where appropriate.

Richard Oram
Planning Archaeologist
County Archaeological Services

21st January 2015

ANNEX 1

PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION - FIELD EVALUATION

1. The project shall be under the control of a qualified archaeologist who should preferably be a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The evaluation should be undertaken in accordance with the IFA's '*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation, 2008*'.
2. The strategy should include proposals to carry out a desk-based Assessment of existing information including County Historic Environment Record data, any previous published fieldwork records, historic maps and aerial photographs.
3. Include an agreed list of specialist consultants who might be required to conserve and/or report on finds and advise, or report on, other aspects of the investigation. An agreed allowance should be made for their fees.
4. The whole range of investigative/recording techniques should be considered. These should be presented and, if discounted, a supporting statement should provide an explanation.
5. A plan at an appropriate scale showing the proposed location and extent of survey works/trenches/test pits etc. should be supplied. An indication of whether trenches will be machine or hand dug should be given.
6. When machine-opened trial trenches are employed:
 - a) An appropriate machine must be used, with an appropriate bucket, usually a wide toothless ditching blade. Choice should be influenced by prevailing site conditions, and the machine must be able to carry out a clean job.
 - b) All machine work must be carried out under the direct supervision of an archaeologist.
 - c) All topsoil or recent overburden must be removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits. The continued use of machinery beyond this point should only take place when specifically agreed with the planning archaeologist as necessary for the particular type of evaluation.
 - d) The top of the first significant archaeological horizon may be cleared by the machine, but must then be cleaned by hand and inspected for features.
7. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits identified must be excavated by hand through a specified or agreed sampling procedure to enable their date, nature, extent and condition to be described. No archaeological deposits should be entirely removed unless this is unavoidable. It is not necessarily expected that all trial trenches will be fully excavated to natural subsoil, but the depth of archaeological deposits across the whole site must be assessed. The stratigraphy of all trial trenches should be recorded even where no

archaeological deposits have been identified. Spoil heaps shall be monitored to allow analysis of the spatial distribution of artefacts.

8. All excavation, either by machine and by hand, must be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features or deposits, which appear to be worthy of preservation in situ.
9. Any human remains, which are encountered, must initially be left in situ. If removal is necessary this must comply with relevant Ministry of Justice licence regulations.

ANNEX 2

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS:

- 1 Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services (Directorate Environment & Economy) will monitor progress and standards throughout the project. To facilitate this, the project design should include a projected timetable on site (indicating staff grades, members and machine hire time if appropriate etc). The County Archaeological Officer shall be notified of the start date at least two weeks prior to commencement of work.

ANNEX 3

POST EXCAVATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

1. The post excavation work should include the processing and primary research, analysis and investigative conservation necessary to prepare the site archive for preservation in a usable form and to produce a full report for publication. Incorporate provision for the long-term storage of both finds and site archive with the County Museums Service. On completion of the fieldwork the site archive will be prepared in the format agreed with the Oxfordshire County Museum Service, who should be consulted at this stage concerning their requirements.
2. For most evaluation projects the preparation of the report should be relatively simple following on directly from the fieldwork and achieved within a standard format. Details of styles and format are to be determined by the Unit. In any event, the report should include as a minimum:
 - a) a plan(s), at an appropriate scale, showing trench layout (as dug) and features located;
 - b) a table summarising any descriptive text showing, per trench, the features, classes and numbers of artefacts located and their interpretation;
 - c) a reconsideration of the methodology used, i.e. a confidence rating;

- d) a plan, at an appropriate scale, showing both actual and, where possible, predicted archaeological deposits; and
- e) a consideration of the archaeological evidence from within the site set in its broader landscape setting.

For more extensive and complicated evaluation projects, especially where they are part of large-scale programmes of work in historic urban centres, the procedures outlined in English Heritage's Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) should be followed for immediate post-field archive preparation and initial assessment. Agreement should then be reached, in collaboration with the CAO, about what aspects need to be taken forward to provide a report in the required format containing the information needed for planning purposes.

ANNEX 4

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION:

1. The archive should be prepared to the minimum acceptable standard defined in MoRPHE. The integrity of the archive should be maintained.
2. The contracted archaeological organisation will endeavour to ensure that the full integrated site archive including all finds shall, with the agreement of the owners, be deposited after completion of post-excavation work with the County Museums Service (Oxfordshire Museums) unless another repository is indicated. If, during the course of excavation, items are found that may be potentially defined as 'Treasure' under the Code of Practice of the Treasure Act 1996, the archaeological contractor will be responsible for ensuring that the County Coroner is informed.
3. Oxfordshire Museums requires that deposited archives from developer-led archaeological work shall be accompanied by funding equivalent to the current HBMC Box Storage Grant. Archaeological organisations shall therefore include an estimate of the costs of deposition for this project in their tender. The estimated cost will be clearly shown and shall be calculated in accordance with the procedures set out in "Charge for Archaeological Archives Deposited with Oxfordshire Museums" *Oxfordshire Museums 1995*.
4. In the event of the legal owner(s) resolving to retain all or part of the site archive, they shall be responsible for the future preservation and maintenance of any material element of that archive. That part of the site archive in question, shall be transferred to the legal owner only after; all necessary processing, research, analysis and investigative/stabilising conservation and correct packing necessary to prepare the archive for preservation and storage in a usable, accessible form, and to produce a full report for publication, has been completed. The owner shall ensure that all necessary provision is made for the long-term preservation of the archive in a satisfactory environment, and that it is accessible for future research. The contracted archaeological organisation will ensure that a proper record of

material kept by the landowner shall be included in the written archive, and the location and ownership of the material shall be stated in the written archive and public record. The explicit (written) permission of the owner shall be obtained for the latter in order that the *Data Protection Act 1984* is not contravened.

5. A summary report and details of archive deposition shall be submitted to the County HER and NMR, and a limited selection of representative photographic slides from the site archive shall be duplicated and deposited with the HER.
6. The County Museums Service shall be notified in advance, of the expected time limits for deposition of the archive.

ANNEX 5

PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION:

1. A digital copy of the summary report (either in pdf or .doc format) shall be supplied to the office of the County Archaeological Officer; for verification and assessment by the CAO or his representative; when the report has been agreed a final digital copy will then be supplied to the County Historic Environment Record (HER) at archaeology@oxfordshire.gov.uk on the understanding that it will become a public document after an appropriate period of time (generally not exceeding six months).
1. All archaeological organisations should ensure that an abstract containing the essential elements of the results precedes the main body of the report.
2. Publication of the results (even if limited to one line reports on work done with negative results) should be pursued, and should take place within a reasonable length of time (normally not more than five years after completion of the work). Style and format to be determined by the archaeological organisation, with regard to agreed standards of archaeological publication, and the house style of the appropriate local, regional or national publication.
3. The report should state the location of the archive and acknowledge the curatorial role played in the project by Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services. It should also acknowledge any provision of information from the County Historic Environment Record, which is copyright of Oxfordshire County Council. Any secondary reports or articles generated by this project shall similarly acknowledge County Archaeological Services and the HER.
4. With regard to publication; the level of the report should take into account the scale of the evaluation, the overall importance of the site based on English Heritage characterisation criteria, and its status within local and regional research strategies. We would suggest that, unless evidence of national or special local significance is revealed, a summary report conforming to the minimum requirements defined in MoRPHE, should be produced for publication.

ANNEX 6

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL Environment & Economy

COUNTY MUSEUM AND ARCHIVE STORE

Witney Road, Standlake, Oxon OX8 7QG

Archaeological Curator: David Moon - 01865 300557

Conservation Laboratory: - 01865 300937

COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES CONTACTS: Address on our letters DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Principle Archaeologist: Hugh Coddington

Tel: 01865 810185 Email: hugh.coddington@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Responsible for archaeological planning matters relating to: West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale District Council. Minerals applications; Thames Water plc Countywide.

Planning Archaeologist: Richard Oram

Tel: 01865 328944 Email: Richard.oram@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Responsible for archaeological planning matters relating to: Cherwell and South Oxfordshire District Councils and Countywide highway applications.

(All other dealings with national and regional bodies/utility Companies are shared between Hugh Coddington and Richard Oram on a District basis).

County Historic Environment Record

Historic Environment Record Officer: Susan Lisk

Tel: 01865 810825 Email: susan.lisk@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Responsible for management, development and appointment-based access to the HER.

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