



GMAAS
Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory
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Planning and Development
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Your Ref: 25/00381/OUT
Date: 9th May 2025

Archaeological Consultation, 25/00381/OUT - Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except the means access) for the development of up to 314 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and employment uses (Use Class B2/B8 including ancillary office space (Use Class E)) comprising up to 13,047sqm Gross External Area together with associated parking, highway infrastructure, works to public rights of way, areas of public open space, landscaping, drainage, ecological enhancements and other works ancillary thereto – Land North and East of Stakehill Industrial Estate, Middleton

Dear Ryan,

Thank you for consulting GMAAS on this application.

The application is supported by an archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) compiled by ECUS in July 2018 for a previous proposal. It makes use of historic maps, data from the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER) and a site visit to identify known and potential heritage assets that might be impacted by development. The DBA summarises that the site has low to medium potential for unknown buried archaeological remains of up to medium heritage significance relating to the prehistoric through to medieval era, and high potential for post-medieval archaeological remains of up to low heritage significance within the site boundary.

Subsequent to the 2018 DBA the site became part of a wider land allocation site known as GMA2 within the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), now known as *Places for Everyone Allocation 2: Stakehill*. GMAAS is aware of a Historic Environment Assessment (HEA) undertaken by Salford Archaeology in September 2020 as part of the GMSF allocation assessments. Within the HEA the land allocation is split into two sites: a northern and southern parcel. The redline boundary for this site is located fully within the southern parcel of the allocation, and the 2020 study provides a much more detailed baseline understanding of the historic environment, summarising the archaeological and built-heritage potential of the site, potential impacts of development, and a strategy to mitigate against those impacts.

The only specific site noted within the redline boundary is the former site of Hopwood's Farm – a farmstead possibly depicted on Yates' 1786 map of the area but not named until late-19th century mapping. The farm has been demolished but the site has not been developed meaning that archaeological remains of the layout, phasing and land-use might survive. The majority of the rest of the proposed site constitutes a large area of archaeological potential where the presence or absence of archaeological remains has not been defined. Potential areas for archaeological



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remains dating to the prehistoric period (as noted in the 2018 DBA and 2020 HEA) are associated with areas of relatively higher ground, close to or overlooking watercourses, and on well-draining soils where geological data suggests the presence of sands and gravels within a wider area of clay deposits. These areas are confined to the north-west, along the northern edge, and in the south-east parts of the site.

The Masterplan has identified areas where development is likely to take place, and these areas should be assessed via archaeological evaluation in the first instance. Whilst the 2018 DBA advocates the use of geophysical survey to inform the location of a subsequent phase of evaluation trenching, the 2020 HEA suggested a pre-application scheme of trenching (including targeting features identified by LiDAR) to establish if and where any significant archaeology should be preserved in-situ through sympathetic planning. Both studies also highlighted the presence of historic field boundaries and hedgerows within the site. It is clear from the Masterplan that some of those boundaries are to be retained, and this is welcomed, but in the instance where boundaries or hedgerows will be lost then these will form some known targets for evaluation to establish a potential origin date.

No pre-application archaeological works have taken place and the proposed Masterplan seems to have been decided upon – but the archaeological potential of much of the site remains an unknown. A scheme of archaeological evaluation is still very much required and should be secured via the addition of a negative planning condition on any forthcoming consent. There may be some areas of the site that are not topographically suitable for geophysical survey, in which case a robust scheme of untargeted trenching across developable areas will be required, but in areas where geophysical survey can be undertaken (ideally including the areas with underlying sands and gravels) any subsequent phase of trenching can be more targeted. If the evaluation was to identify areas of significance, or interest that could not be fully investigated under evaluative conditions, then there would need to be an additional phase of more targeted excavation.

The next steps would be for all existing archaeological assessments of the site to be reviewed and a scheme for appropriate evaluation to be secured via production of a detailed Project Design (PD) (formerly known as a Written Scheme of Investigation, WSI). The PD should provide a summary archaeological and historical background, appropriate methodologies for a phased evaluation of the site, research objectives aligned with the North West Historic Environment Research Framework, and provision for appropriate reporting, archiving and dissemination of results in line with NPPF. If consent for the development is given, GMAAS recommend that the archaeological works are secured by a condition, worded as follows:

No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works. The works are to be undertaken in accordance with a Project Design (PD) submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The PD shall cover the following:

- 1. Informed by the North West Regional Research Framework, a phased programme and methodology of investigation and recording to include:**
 - i – geophysical survey***
 - ii – informed by the geophysics (where possible), archaeological evaluation trenching***
 - iii - informed by the above, more detailed targeted excavation (subject of a new PD).***
- 2. A programme for post investigation assessment to include:**
 - i - analysis of the site investigations records and finds***
 - ii - production of a final report on the investigation results.***
- 3. Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.**
- 4. Dissemination of the results commensurate with their significance.**
- 5. Provision for archive deposition of the report and records of the site investigation.**
- 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved PD.**

Reason: In accordance with NPPF Section 16, Paragraph 218 - To record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.

The work should be undertaken by a suitably experienced and qualified archaeological contractor, funded by the applicant, and in accordance with guidance provided by GMAAS who would also monitor the implementation of the works on behalf of Rochdale Borough Council.

Yours sincerely,



Ben Dyson BA MLitt

Senior Planning Archaeologist

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