



GMAAS
Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory
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Environment & Life Sciences
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Anna Hayes
Rochdale Borough Council
Economy & Place Directorate
Number One Riverside
Smith Street
Rochdale
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Your Ref: PL/2026/0679
Date: 19th August 2026

Archaeological Consultation: PL/2026/0679 - Construction of an SEN school, with associated access, parking, landscaping, drainage, land regrading and associated works - Land Off Heywood Old Road, Middleton, Rochdale, OL10 2QN

Dear Anna,

Thank you for consulting GMAAS on this application.

GMAAS provided comments on this scheme at Pre-application stage (PREAPP/00146/24, 5th February 2025) advising that an archaeological desk-based assessment would be unlikely to elucidate any further significant new findings than the baseline formed for the adjacent site, Edgar Wood Academy, by the study compiled by Wardell Armstrong in 2020 (the current application site falls within the wider study area of that former report). Instead, it was recommended that a scheme of archaeological evaluation is implemented, starting with a geophysical survey of the site, results of which were advised to be submitted alongside any full application to inform the planning process, and to enable the early preparation of any schemes of follow-on archaeological works.

To reiterate the potential archaeological interest at the site, the area retains a low potential for Prehistoric evidence, low-nil potential for Roman, moderate to high potential for medieval (mainly related to agricultural activity), alongside more recent post-medieval agricultural, drainage and mineral extraction evidence. A former stone slab-constructed boundary wall would have been of some local historic significance, but this was recorded and removed as part of the Edgar Wood Academy development. It is unknown if further remains associated with the boundary have survived elsewhere, and the existing baseline potential for the newly proposed site remains intact and unevaluated. The known history of land-use as primarily pastoral suggests that conditions for the preservation of buried archaeological remains would be good.

It is clear from the Planning Statement submitted with the current application that GMAAS' advice was acknowledged, however, the undertaking of the survey was instead suggested to be controlled via planning condition (Paul Butler Associates, July 2026, paragraph 6.47), on the basis that any below ground archaeology is not anticipated to be of the order above local to regional. This is an acceptable suggestion, so long as it is understood that geophysical survey of areas to be developed will serve as the first step in evaluation of the site. Results should be used to inform the requirement and scope of any follow-on targeted evaluation via trenching and/or the opening of areas for strip-map-record. In turn, any areas of significance identified during evaluation would lead to a requirement for more detailed excavation.



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The above scheme of works should be secured via a condition of any forthcoming consent, with works undertaken in accordance with Project Designs that set out the methodologies for fieldwork, assessment, reporting and report deposition, dissemination/publication, and archiving. The condition should be worded as follows:

No development ground works shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured and implemented 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 Rochdale Borough Council. The PD shall cover the following:

- 1. A phased programme and methodology of investigation and recording to include:***
 - i. geophysical survey***
 - ii. archaeological evaluation trenching (may include areas of evaluative strip-map-record)***
 - iii. informed by the above, targeted open area excavation and recording (subject of a separate PD)***
- 2. A programme for post investigation assessment to include:***
 - i. analysis of the site investigation records and finds***
 - ii. production of a final report on the significance of the heritage interest recorded***
- 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, finds 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 (August 2026) Section 20, Policy HE10 – The applicant should record and advance understanding of the significance of the asset to be lost in a manner proportionate to its importance and the potential impact upon it; and should make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible by depositing it in the relevant Historic Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.

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,



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