



GMAAS
Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory
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Your Ref: OTH/2026/0737
Date: 9th September 2026

Archaeological Consultation, OTH/2026/0737 - Request for Scoping Opinion in relation to a proposed residential-led development at the JPA 1.2 Northern Gateway, Simister Bowlee site – Northern Gateway Simister Bowlee Site, Heywood

Dear Ryan,

Thank you for consulting GMAAS with this request for an EIA Scoping Opinion.

The Scoping Report (Asteer Planning, August 2026) includes a section (7) detailing 'Environmental Topics Which Are Not Significant'; archaeology falls within this section of the report between paragraphs 7.24 and 7.32. This section presents a preliminary archaeological baseline for the site based on searches of the National Heritage List for England for designated Heritage Assets (NHLE), the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (GM HER), and consideration of historic mapping. It also references a geophysical survey (ASWAYS, 2020) undertaken on one small part of the site (a single field south of Heaton Farm within the Bury portion of the site), and the results of archaeological evaluation trenching – which presumably followed-on from the geophysical survey to ground-truth the results and test anomalies. The geophysical survey and evaluation were targeted on an area where the HER records a site of cropmarks identified in 1989 that indicated a number of potential Romano-British enclosures, roundhouses, associated field systems and trackways. The evaluation report is not referenced and neither GMAAS or the HER has a copy of that report, but the Scoping Report states that the evaluation did identify some cut features. Results were inconclusive with nothing to suggest Iron Age or Roman settlement.

One report not referenced is a Historic Environment Assessment Screening Exercise undertaken by Salford Archaeology in 2019 for the wider allocation site 'GMA1 Northern Gateway' of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (now Places for Everyone). Despite this, the section on archaeology in the Scoping Report provides a high-level historic and archaeological baseline for the site (now known as JPA1.2) which generally accords with the 2019 assessment. Whilst the site contains no known sites of prehistoric or Roman activity there remains a background potential based on a consideration of the wider study area. The wider study area also contains evidence of findspots and sites dating to the medieval, post medieval, industrial and modern periods, including the site of a WWI camp at Heaton Park to the south-west.

The report concludes that any surviving archaeological assets within the Site are considered likely to be of no greater than medium (borough) to low (local) significance. GMAAS concurs with this



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conclusion, and is satisfied that archaeology can be scoped out of the EIA providing that a detailed archaeological desk-based assessment is submitted with the planning application. This should include a detailed site walkover to assess the site for evidence of clearly identifiable archaeological remains. An important aspect of the Rochdale part of the site will be to identify the nature and extent of surviving features related to RAF Bowlee, a Second World War Home Guard Barrage Balloon Depot with associated defence positions and features that remain largely unrecorded. This will enable a decision to be reached as to the merits of undertaking further archaeological investigation of the site in advance of development. GMAAS will be content to see any such work secured through a negative planning condition attached to consent.

Yours sincerely



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