

## **JUNCTION 13 ECO PARK, STROUD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

### **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS**

22/01/2020

#### **Introduction**

This report has been prepared by Cotswold Archaeology on behalf of Ecotricity, to summarise the heritage and archaeological constraints of land at Junction 13 off the M5 motorway (the 'Site'). The report includes a summary of the planning history to date, a summary of the archaeological and heritage baseline and constraints, the potential effects of a development at this location, and a proposed methodology for assessing the identified effects. The report has been prepared based on information readily available to date, And readily available online sources

#### **Planning history**

An initial EIA Screening and Scoping request was submitted in July 2015 (Ref: 2015/1820/EIAS) for a mixed-use development comprising a sports and green technology centre at this location. The decision received from the council identified that an Environmental Impact (EIA) Assessment was required.

In January 2016, an outline planning application was submitted for 'a 5000 capacity football stadium and other ancillary uses (Use Class D2); and up to 41300sq m of B1 floorspace; up to 22,800sq m of B2/B8 floorspace; indoor football playing pitch (use Class D2), other recreational use (use Class D2); Transport Hub (including ancillary parking for cars and coaches, and a drop off point for buses and taxis), with all matters reserved save for access' (application reference S.16/0043/OUT). The illustrative concept plan submitted with the application included proposals for a 'Green Technology Hub' consisting of B-class employment uses, on the northern parcel of land. The Southern portion of the application site below the A419 was originally proposed as 'The Sports Hub' including a football stadium with various open training pitches, additional sporting facilities and parking. A new B1 (Office) block of some 5000sqm was also proposed for use by Ecotricity. This application included a heritage assessment, a geophysics report, a report of a 2% trial trench evaluation, and a heritage chapter within an ES report.

In December 2017, the application was significantly revised and removed the proposed employment land, Nature Conservation Area, and some of the sporting facilities, and relocated the sporting facilities to the northern side of the A419. No development was proposed on the southern parcel of land. These revisions included a revised ES, with an updated heritage assessment and ES chapter. The application was heard by the LPA's Development Control Committee on 12 June 2019. The Planning Officer's Recommendation to Committee was that 'the Committee resolve to grant the Planning Manager authority to determine the application and grant outline planning permission upon completion of a satisfactory legal agreement and subject to the recommended planning conditions.' However, the Committee resolved to refuse planning permission and the LPA's decision was issued on 26 June 2019.

Following the above refusal, an outline planning application was submitted (S.19/1418/OUT) for a sports complex on the northern parcel of land. This application was heard by the LPA's Development Control Committee on 18th December 2019. At this committee, Members resolved to grant outline planning permission subject to the recommended planning conditions and completion of a S106 agreement. Therefore, at the time of writing it is considered that the northern part of the site is acceptable in planning terms for the proposed uses.

Given this context, the focus of more detailed study will be to review the southern parcel of the allocated site.

### Site Description

The Site is located to the east of Junction 13 off the M5 motorway, comprised of ten agricultural fields, bisected by the A419 running in a northwest/ southeast direction. The Site contains several mature, intact hedgerows and is bounded by the river Frome to the south west.

### Summary of archaeological and heritage baseline

This summary is focused on the main archaeological and heritage constraints, which are detailed as follows.



### ***The Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA)***

The Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA) is a linear conservation area, following the valleys of the River Frome and the Nailsworth Stream, extending to the east, west and south of Stroud. The IHCA follows not only these watercourses, but the various 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century transport infrastructures, which were developed along these waterways, representing a new era of industry in the Stroud Valleys. The linear nature of the IHCA serves as a link between these industrial developments and was designed to preserve the context of Stroud's industrial legacy.

### ***Listed Buildings***

While there are no Listed Buildings within the Site, there are several Listed Buildings within proximity, situated along Grove Lane. This includes: Grove Farmhouse (1090560), Westend Farmhouse (1153109), Mulgrove (1340740), Milestone (1153084), and Oldbury House (1152742), all of which are Grade II Listed Buildings.

### ***Roman Archaeology***

Within the southern part of the Site, south of the A419, there is a known Roman Villa. This villa was first noted in the 1920s when a ploughman found Roman pottery, coins, roof tiles, flue tiles mortar and tesserae in the field. Subsequent archaeological evaluations confirmed the villa was occupied between the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Stone wall foundations and floor layers with mosaic and *opus signinum* were recorded, and a potential T-shaped kiln, set within a rectangular ditched enclosure. The remains are not well-preserved, as walls had been subject to later robbing and there has also been significant plough damage. Boundary ditches of the associated Roman field system were also recorded, largely, again, to the south of the road near the villa. Some evidence was found for these to also extend into the area to the north of the A419. Such remains are of sufficient interest to comprise 'heritage assets', but of low heritage significance.

### ***Medieval Landscape***

In the medieval period the Site lay within the ecclesiastical parish of Eastington. This was historically divided into two manorial estates: Alkerton Manor to the south of the River Frome, and Eastington Manor to the north of the river. The land within the centre and north of the Site formed a part of the great arable open-fields of Eastington manor in the medieval period and is likely to have comprised a part of the manorial open-field of Westlow or the West Field. These open-fields were not enclosed, but divided into strips and furlongs

according to ownership. The geophysical survey carried out in 2015 found evidence for medieval cut furrows which confirms the former presence of 'ridge and furrow' earthworks. The earthworks survive above-ground in an eroded form across parts of the northern section of the Site. The south of the Site formed part of the medieval water meadow on the bank of the River Frome.

### ***Post Medieval Landscape***

The gradual enclosure of the medieval open fields had begun by the mid-16th century, and continued throughout the next three centuries. The enclosure of 69 acres in Upper and Lower Mead fields by Act of Parliament in 1867 completed the process of enclosure in the parish. Hence, the field pattern across the Site is largely of mid-16<sup>th</sup> to early-19<sup>th</sup> century date. The medieval furlong pattern was utilised to provide the field hedges, reflected by the distinctive 'dog-leg' shape. A significant degree of boundary loss has occurred across the Site. This has occurred partly, through the process of post-war field amalgamation and rationalisation, and as a result of the construction of two major roads: the A419 and the motorway M5. The hedgerows that do survive qualify as 'important' hedgerows under the criteria for 'archaeology and history' of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

### **Potential effects from Development**

Development within the Site has the potential to impact on both subsurface archaeology and above ground archaeology. Of particular sensitivity are any impacts to the IHCA. Within previous application on the site, both Historic England and the Stroud Council Conservation Officer raised concerns with development in this area impacting upon the setting of the conservation area. The surrounding Listed Buildings, particularly those on Grove Lane, also have the potential to have their setting impacted on by the development. Below ground archaeology has the potential to be affected by the development, if located within the development footprint.

### **Proposed Methodology to assess effects**

An updated Desk Based Assessment will be conducted to identify the archaeological and historical baseline of the Site, and its significance and archaeological potential. The report will be produced in accordance with professional guidance including the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.

The assessment will be informed by a walkover survey and updated data gathered within a 500m study area from the following sources:

- Historic England's National Heritage List, for statutory designated heritage assets (including scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, battlefields and world heritage sites);
- The Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record, for details of previously completed archaeological works and known heritage assets in the study area, as well as data on historic landscape character;
- Historic England Archives, for additional recorded heritage assets;
- The relevant local studies archive and record offices, for documentary sources and historic mapping to demonstrate previous land-uses that may have caused disturbance within the site; and
- The BGS Online record of borehole data, to query if any relevant borehole information is held for the site.

The Settings Assessment will be carried out in accordance with the following guidance published by Historic England: Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments (2016), Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2016), and The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017); Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019) as well as the respective Standard and Guidance published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and by Historic England.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, there are several heritage and archaeological constraints for this site that are well known and understood from previous assessment. Any proposed development would be recommended to produce a heritage assessment to assess the sensitivity of the heritage and archaeological features, and to assess the effect of any development on these features. The IHCA, Roman villa, and Listed Buildings do not in themselves preclude development in this Site; however, any effects identified on these heritage features will need to be carefully mitigated through design or further archaeological investigation. This may include field evaluation in the form of geophysical survey and trial trenching, in areas that have not already been subject to previous investigation.

