

# JUNCTION 13 ECO PARK, STROUD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

## HERITAGE APPRAISAL

### *Introduction*

This Heritage Appraisal has been commissioned by Ecotricity regarding their development of an Eco Park complex off Junction 13 on the M5 (the 'Site'). A masterplan has been designed based off ongoing discussion with Stroud District Council. The purpose of this Heritage Appraisal is to identify the key heritage constraints regarding the current masterplan. The report includes a summary of the current masterplan design and the archaeological and historical baseline, identifies the main heritage constraints for the development, comments on how these constraints have been sensitively incorporated into the current design, and provides further recommendations.

This report references evidence as assessed as part of previous reports compiled by Cotswold Archaeology. These include the following;

- 2015 Land at M5 Junction 13, West of Stonehouse, Stroud, Gloucestershire, Heritage Assessment;
- 2020 Summary of Heritage and Archaeological Constraints; and
- 2020 Forest Green Rovers Training Pitches, Junction 13, M5, Stroud, Gloucestershire Heritage Desk-Based Assessment.

### *Masterplan*

The masterplan has been designed regarding ongoing advice from the Council, including the County Archaeologist for Gloucestershire Council and the Conservation Officer for Stroud District Council. The current design (Fig. 1) includes land to both the north and south of the A419 with the land to the north comprising a football stadium, B1 employment (orange), B2/8 employment (red) car parking (pale green for built structure and striped green for overspill created from reinforced grass), a Care Home and village (striped purple), and a pedestrian zone (hatched brown). The land to the south comprises training pitches, a club house (yellow), a hotel and fitness centre (purple), B1 employment (orange) and B2/8 employment (red), and carparking. To aid this appraisal the Site has been spilt into the following three sections as shown on Fig. 2;

**Section A (Blue)** – the land to the north of the A419;

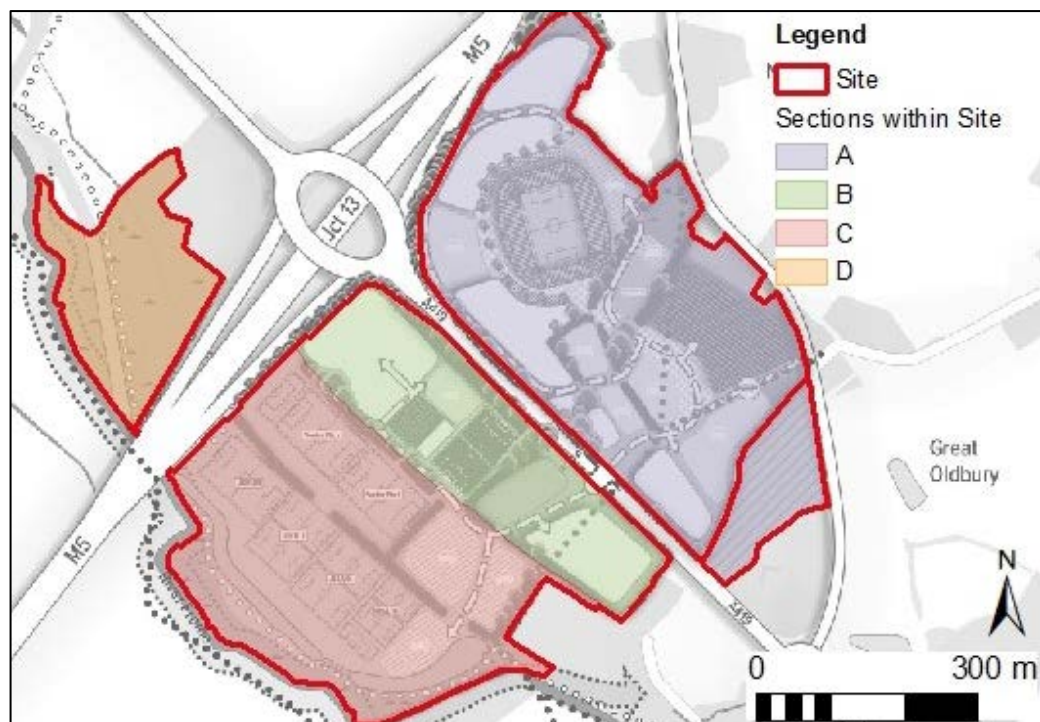
**Section B (Green)** – the land to the south of the A419 located beyond the designation for the Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA);

**Section C (Red)** - the land within the IHCA; and

**Section D (Orange)** - the land to the north of the M5.



**Fig. 1: Masterplan of Site design**



**Fig. 2: Sections within the Site used in Heritage Appraisal**

### *Archaeological and Historic Baseline*

The historical baseline is summarised below, for full detail please see Cotswold Archaeology 2015 and Cotswold Archaeology 2020 as mentioned above.

#### *Prehistoric land use*

Evidence for settlement in the later prehistoric period is found within the environs of the Site whereby remains of an Iron Age/Romano-British settlement and cemetery were identified in the 1930s to the west of the Site. However, no evidence of activity has been recorded by previous archaeological investigation within, and immediately adjacent to, the Site, suggesting a low potential for prehistoric remains to survive.

#### *Romano-British land use*

A Romano-British Villa dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD, known as Whitminster Villa, its enclosure, and associated field system have been identified through previous geophysical and archaeological evaluations within the Site (Fig. 3). Of the known villa remains recorded within the Site, these have been shown to be poorly preserved, having been subject to later robbing and significant plough damage, and as such it does not qualify for designation as a scheduled monument. These remains hold evidential and historical (illustrative value) and there is potential for as yet undiscovered remains associated with this settlement to be situated within the Site.

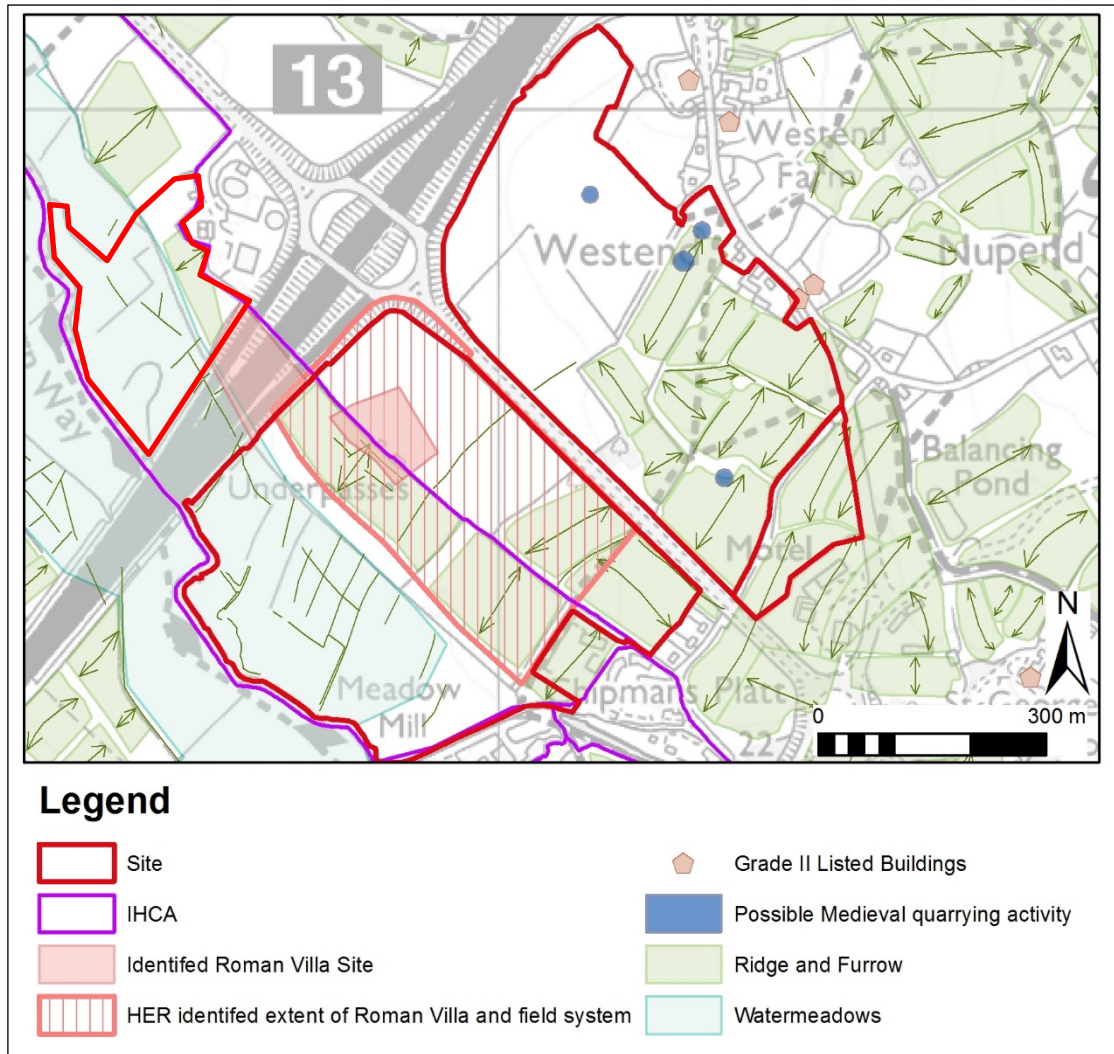
#### *Medieval land use*

Within the medieval period the Site lay within the historic parish of Eastington with the Site itself occupying part of the open field system and meadow land on the edge of known settlement likely associated with Eastington Manor. This is evidenced through cropmarks of medieval ridge and furrow, and earthworks representative of a water meadow system of parallel and perpendicular ditches (Fig. 3). A medieval field boundary, pit feature, and an area of likely quarrying and subsequent levelling is also identified within the northern part of the Site (Fig. 3). Archaeological features that survive within the Site are likely to comprise of earthworks and below ground remains representative of its agricultural use in this period. These are common archaeological features and thus exhibit limited heritage significance.

*Post-medieval land use*

During the post-medieval period the Site continued to form part of the wider agricultural hinterland in the parish of Eastington. A number of the farmsteads in the area, some of which have been designated as Listed Buildings including those at Westend to the immediate north of the Site and contain buildings dating from between the 17th and 19th centuries.

Throughout the 18th century the production and trade of cloth saw considerable growth and the cloth industry became established throughout the Stroud Valleys, with mills located at the valley bottoms providing employment for the surrounding villages, such as Meadow Mill to the south of the Site. The expansion of the cloth industry was greatly aided by an upgrading of the transport network within the Stroud Valley which included the Stroudwater Canal built between 1775 and 1779, linking the Stroud Valley to the River Severn. This canal route has been designated as an Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (IHCA; Fig. 3) and includes the route of the historic canal along with mill buildings, built up areas, and areas of rural green space. The now infilled line of the canal roughly extends through the southern half of the Site.



**Fig. 3: Archaeological and Historical Baseline**

### *Key Heritage Constraints and consideration in Masterplan*

#### Section A

The main heritage constraints for Section A of the Site comprise the following;

- Physical effects to potential archaeological remains relating to Roman settlement or medieval land use;
- Non-physical effects to Listed Buildings situated along Grove Lane as a result of changes to their setting; and
- Non-physical effect to the IHCA as a result of changes to its wider setting.

The key Listed Buildings along Grove Lane sensitive to effects of development within the Site comprise Grove Farmhouse (List Entry: 1090560), Westend Farmhouse (List Entry:

1153190), and Millgrove (List Entry: 134074). The current masterplan (Fig. 1) has been designed sensitively to these Listed Buildings in the following way.

The Site forms part of the wider agricultural landscape for Grove Farmhouse, Westend Farmhouse and Millgrove. However, it does not form a part of their design layout and setting which contributes to their historical significance or value (Cotswold Archaeology 2015; Cotswold Archaeology 2020), thus the significance of these assets will not be harmed by the proposed development. Currently views towards the Site are available from Grove and Westend Farmhouses, however, are limited from Millgrove due to the adjacent modern house. The design of the current master plan is sensitive to the intervisibility between the Site and these Listed Buildings and includes green space and a biodiversity enhancement area, including mature trees and hedged boundaries, within the section of the Site closest to the designated assets. This will provide some level of screening of the proposed development, limiting the view and thus the effect of the built form within the Site, reducing the effect of the Site in the current experience of these assets.

The significance of the Listed Milestone (List Entry: 1153084) will not be affected by the proposed development as its setting comprises the road which is not within the Site.

The IHCA is located within the southern of the Site, although no built form is designed to lie within the IHCA. The land within Section A forms part of the agrarian landscape which surrounds the IHCA and provides functional context and historic value, contributing to its significance. Section A is located within the wider landscape setting of the IHCA, which includes Section B and the surrounding agricultural landscape which contributes to the rural character of the IHCA. The setting, therefore, will be affected by the presence of a buildings within this rural landscape. However, the design of the current master plan includes natural screening around the built form within the Site and along the southern border of 'Section A' and the A419 to reduce the visibility of the proposed development. This will reduce the visual dominance of the buildings within the Site in views to the north from the Conservation Area. It is also important to recognise that the Site forms only a small part of a wider landscape which is still appreciable.

Harm to potential archaeological remains within the Site will be mitigation through an additional archaeological mitigation, to be agreed with the County Archaeologist.

## Section B

The main heritage constraints for Section B of the Site comprise the following;

- Physical effects to the identified Roman Villa within the Site;
- Physical effects to potential archaeological remains relating to Roman settlement;  
and
- Non-physical effect to the IHCA as a result of changes to its setting.

The current masterplan (Fig. 1) has been designed sensitively to these constraints in the following way.

Whilst the development design does include built form (B2/8employment) within the location of the identified Whitminster Villa and its associated field system, it is acknowledged that a mitigation strategy will be established to mitigate any effects to the surviving archaeological remains. Mitigation has previously been agreed with the then County Archaeologist, Mr Charles Parry regarding development within the Site. This comprised archaeological observation and recording during on site construction and agreed that mitigation for the Roman villa would comprise either preservation *in situ* or subjecting the villa to a full archaeological excavation, of which both strategies were approved by the Senior Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council. It is recommended that an updated mitigation strategy be agreed with the current County Archaeologist, Mrs Rachel Foster. The mitigation strategy will include any unknown remains which survive within the Site.

The IHCA is located within the southern part of the Site, although no built form is designed to lie within the IHCA. Section B is located within the setting of the IHCA which will be affected by the presence of buildings within a rural agricultural landscape. However, the design of the current master plan includes natural screening around the built form within the Site and along the northern edge of the Conservation Area. This will reduce the visual dominance of the buildings within the Site in views to the north from the Conservation Area.

The central section of 'Section B' has also been sensitively designed regarding the historic view from within the Site looking north-east towards to Cotswold Escarpment. This is an important view within the section of the IHCA that contributes to its significance. The design of the development with an indoor and outdoor training turf pitch, a clubhouse, and single storey car parking in the centre will enable long distance views across the landscape, and the retention of this view. Whilst the view will not be appreciable from the route of the historic

canal, which is no longer extant, the development is proposing a cycle route through Section C which will afford visibility of this key view across the Site towards the escarpment, retaining some of the historic experience and aesthetic experience within the IHCA.

It is also important to recognise that the Site forms only a small part of a wider landscape which is still appreciable.

### Section C

The main heritage constraints for Section C of the Site comprise the following;

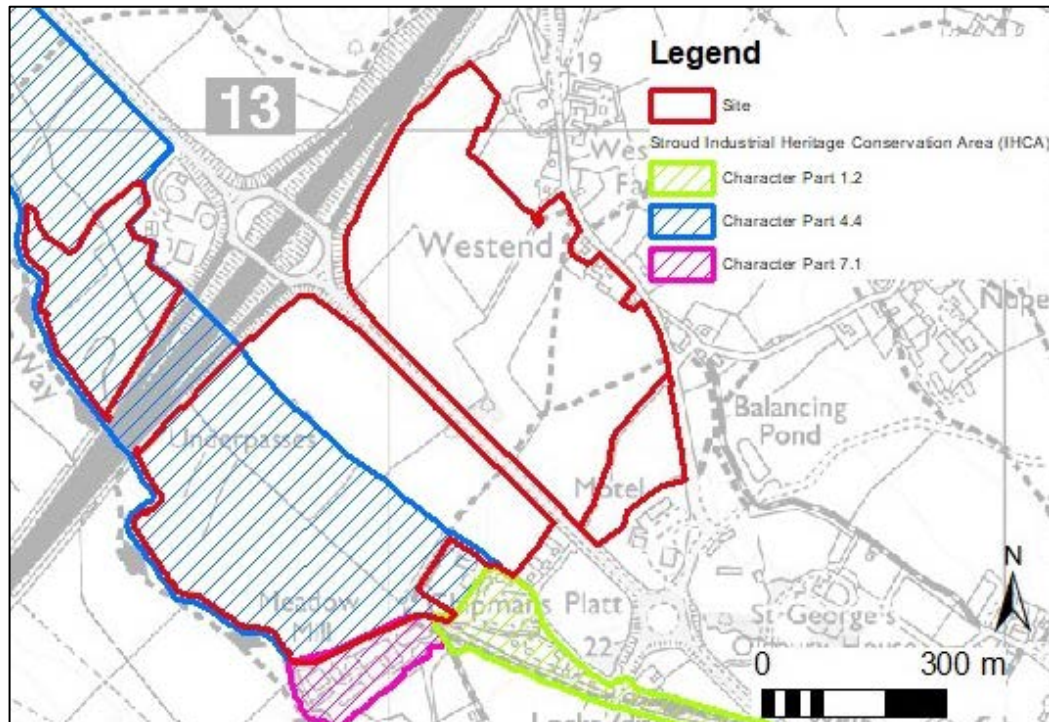
- Physical effects to the identified Roman Villa and field system within the Site;
- Physical effects to potential archaeological remains relating to Roman settlement; and
- Physical effects to the IHCA, particularly Character Area 4.4.

The current masterplan (Fig. 1) has been designed sensitively to these constraints in the following way.

As aforementioned, a mitigation strategy either comprising preservation *in situ* or a full archaeological excavation has been agreed and will mitigate affects to the archaeological recourse as a result of the proposed development.

The IHCA is located within the southern part of the Site. This Conservation Area has been segmented into Character Parts, as defined by the 2008 Conservation Area Appraisal. The land which falls within the Site is part of the Character Area 4.4 of the IHCA (Fig. 4) with Character Area 1.2 and 7.1 adjacent to the southern border of the Site.





**Fig. 4 Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area and Character Parts in vicinity to the Site**

The masterplan includes the creation of a new canal route to the south of the historic canal (Fig. 1) which will link up a part of the 'missing mile's' section of the Stroudwater Canal and re-create a navigable canal route through the Site. The creation of this section of canal will result in the re-creation of a fully navigable route through the landscape to the River Severn, creating a heritage benefit, by enabling the appreciation of and the experience of traveling through the landscape in a way that is akin to the historic route of travel along the Stroudwater Canal. Additionally, a cycle path is proposed to run along side the route of the canal which will exemplify a tow path along the canal.

Additional elements of the masterplan within the IHCA include football training pitches, whilst this will change the character of this section of the IHCA through loss of agricultural land, it does preserve 'green space' within the conservation area, albeit of a different spatial layout and nature, and does not result in built form which would dominate the experience from the historic route of the canal. Similarly, the car parking proposed for this section will comprise overspill parking constructed of reinforced grass, preserving an element of 'green space' within the area. This aspect of the design has been amended, through consultation with the Conservation Officer, with the initial design comprising built form of B1 and B2/8 building within the Site to the current design iteration. This current design is a result of working with

and responding to comments from the Council, and results in a reduced magnitude of harm to the character of the IHCA through a sensitively designed masterplan. It is recommended that any fencing or auxiliary infrastructure (*i.e.* fencing) not included within the outline application, is kept minimal to reduce its visual dominance and impact on the Character Area.

A further heritage benefit is the proposed inclusion of a 'heritage interpretation' panel at Westfield Bridge on the south-eastern edge of the Site. The addition of the interpretation panels within the Site will create an enhancement of the canal as a heritage feature, enabling increased accessibility, interpretation, and understanding of the canal and a continual linear feature through the landscape.

#### Section D

The main heritage constraints for Section D of the Site is the IHCA. The proposed development for this section comprises only the re-created route of the Stroudwater canal, in an altered location, and the creation of a biodiversity enhancement area. This will provide a heritage benefit through the establishment of the canal, as discussed above, and complement the current green area, retaining the significance of the 'green-belt' within this section of the IHCA. The proposed development therefore positively contributes to the significance of this part of the IHCA.

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

In conclusion, whilst the proposed development will result in some harm to the historic environment the masterplan has been designed in consideration with the key heritage constraints including the IHCA, Listed Buildings along Grove Lane, and the known and potential archaeological resource. No built form has been designed within the IHCA which will reduce the physical impact on its significance and in built screening has been provided to limit to non-physical impact of the proposed development of the setting of the IHCA and Listed buildings along Grove Land. This heritage led designed approach has resulted in a masterplan which minimises harm to the historic environment and provides some heritage benefits, in lines with Historic England Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' (2019). The heritage benefits provided as part of this proposal include the following:

- The establishment of a new section of canal will form part of the 'missing mile' of the Stroudwater Canal and result in the re-creation of a navigable canal route through the landscape. This has been identified within the emerging Stroud Local Plan (Stroud District Council 2019); and

- The inclusion of heritage interpretation boards at Westfield Bridge which will enhance the canal as a heritage feature, enabling increased accessibility, interpretation, and understanding of the canal and a continual linear feature through the landscape.

The following recommendations have been made to further reduce the effect of the proposed development on the historic environment;

- Re-agreeing the mitigation strategy for onsite archaeological remains with the current County Archaeologist;
- Ensuring a limited height on the car parking (single storey) and additional built elements in the central Section B of the Site in order to retain key view; and
- Ensuring a limited height and scale of any future auxiliary infrastructure (limited to fencing/lighting etc.) associated with the football pitches within the IHCA. Associated infrastructure will not comprise any built form, as agreed in discussion with the LPA and the Conservation Officer for Stroud District Council.



**APPENDIX 1: RESPONSE COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGIST DATED  
JANUARY 2016**



From:  
Charles Parry, Archaeologist,  
Gloucestershire County Council

Mr David Lowin  
Planning Services  
Stroud District Council  
Ebley Mill  
Stroud  
Gloucestershire GL5 4UB

charles.parry@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Charles Parry

(01452) 425669

475.5.19  
SDC/S16/0043/OUT

29.1.2016

Dear Mr Lowin

**S.16/0043/OUT Land at M5 Junction 13 west of Stonehouse, Eastington**

**5,000 capacity football stadium and other ancillary uses (Use Class D2); up to 41,300m<sup>2</sup> of B1 floor space; up to 22,800m<sup>2</sup> of B2/B8 floor space; indoor football playing pitch (Use Class D2), other recreational uses (Use Class D2); leisure facilities (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**

**Archaeological implications**

Thank you for consulting me regarding the above planning application. I wish to make the following observations regarding the archaeological implications of this scheme.

I note that this planning application is supported by an Environmental Statement in which archaeology is discussed in Chapter 7, based on a programme of assessment and evaluation which comprised a Heritage Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology, report dated November 2015), a geophysical survey (GSB Prospection Ltd, report dated September 2015), and trial-trenching (Cotswold Archaeology, report dated November 2015). In my view sufficient information has been made available regarding archaeological impact to allow an informed planning decision to be made on that issue.

A total of 82 trial-trenches were investigated, the trenches being placed to investigate ground anomalies predicted by previous geophysical survey and also to test areas where no such anomalies were found. I advise that the result of the archaeological investigation was positive, since the work revealed significant archaeological remains relating to settlement and activity dating to the Roman and medieval periods.

A major focus of archaeological activity was confirmed in the southern central part of the application site, where a large ditched enclosure (investigated in Trenches 4, 5, 7 and 12) was found to contain the remains of a Roman building interpreted as a villa (the 'Whitminster villa' identified by previous small-scale investigation of the site undertaken during the

1970s). The building (investigated in Trench 5) was represented by masonry wall foundations, and floor-formation layers on which small areas of mosaic and *opus signinum* floor surfacing were preserved.

Within the enclosure surrounding the villa further structural remains had been found during the 1970s, and these were partly re-investigated by Trench 81, revealing the remains of a possible T-shaped kiln.

In the area surrounding the villa numerous ditched boundaries indicate the presence of an associated Roman agricultural landscape comprising a system of enclosed fields or paddocks. To the north-west of the villa a boundary was observed in Trench 3; to the south and east the boundaries (many defined by the geophysical survey) were found in Trenches 10, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 20. Within enclosures investigated by Trenches 19 and 20, the presence of several pits and post-settings, as well as a large assemblage of pottery from a ditch, would appear to suggest a focus of Roman activity.

Roman boundary ditches were also found in Trenches 22 and 32: the presence of such features suggests that the Roman field system may extend well to the north of the villa.

Finds of pottery suggest that the villa and its associated agricultural landscape were occupied during the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Some of the material may be a little earlier and may indicate a phase of activity on this site dating to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

A large number of undated ditched boundaries were found during the investigation, but their significance has not been established. Close to the Roman villa, such boundaries were observed in Trenches 2, 3 and 6. While the report on the trial-trenching suggests these may be late features unrelated to the Roman phase, it is equally possible that they may relate to an agricultural landscape which is earlier than the villa.

Evidence for medieval activity was found in Trenches 38 and 49, represented by pits. Undated pits in Trenches 37 and 43 may also be of medieval date. The function of these features is uncertain, although the large pit in Trench 49 may relate to quarrying activity.

In considering the results of the archaeological evaluation it should be borne in mind that the geophysical survey will not have fully detected all remains, since there is a range of smaller archaeological features – such as pits, post-settings linear gullies and graves – which would not be detectable at the survey intervals used for the work. In addition, the report on the trial-trenching notes that ditched boundaries found in Trenches 3, 12 and 19, and pits found in Trenches 19 and 20, were not predicted by the geophysical survey, possibly because they were located within later plough furrows. These factors mean that the archaeology within the proposed development area is likely to be more extensive than the investigation currently suggests.

It is clear from the results of the evaluation that the archaeological remains are not of the first order of preservation. The walls of the Roman villa had been removed by later robbing with the result that only the wall foundations would appear to be preserved. In addition, the Roman and medieval remains have been subject to later ploughing, with the result that most surfaces associated with the remains have been destroyed, the exceptions being very small areas of flooring preserved within the villa building. Some disturbances to the archaeology within the villa enclosure are also likely to have been caused by the construction of a modern agricultural building which currently stands there.

For those reasons it is my view that the archaeology on this site is not of the highest quality and significance, so meriting preservation *in situ*. Nevertheless, it is my view that, while not of the highest significance, the archaeological deposits on this site will make an important contribution to our understanding of the archaeology of the county, and the wider region.

I confirm that I have no objection in principle to the development of this site, with the proviso that an appropriate programme of work to excavate and record any significant archaeological remains should be undertaken prior to the development in order to mitigate the ground impacts of this scheme.

To facilitate this I recommend that a condition based on model condition 55 from Appendix A of Circular 11/95 is attached to any planning permission which may be given for this development, ie;

*‘No development shall take place within the application site until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority’.*

**Reason: to make provision for a programme of archaeological mitigation, so as to record and advance understanding of any heritage assets which will be lost, in accordance with paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework**

Lastly, I wish to make the following brief observations regarding the applicant’s proposal to undertake development within the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area containing the historic line of the Stroudwater Canal, and to divert the canal on a new line to the south. It is difficult to see how this proposal will ‘preserve and enhance’ the Conservation Area, and this is no doubt an issue on which you will be seeking views from your advisor on conservation issues.

Should planning permission be granted for development on the line of the former canal then in my view there would be a need to undertake recording of that heritage asset in advance of its destruction. Such work would in my view be appropriately secured by the condition recommended above.

I have no further observations.

Yours sincerely

Charles Parry, Archaeologist  
Gloucestershire County Council