

Rockfield Road, Monmouth
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
June 2016

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Report

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

Site

Rockfield Road, Monmouth

Client

Hallam Land Management

Planning Authority

Monmouth County Council

Site Centred At

SO 495 134

Prepared and Approved By

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Report Status

Final

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Headland Archaeology. 2013. Land off Rockfield Road, Monmouth: Archaeological Evaluation

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000 -12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 - 4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 - 2,200 BC
Bronze Age	2,200 - 700 BC
Iron Age	700 - AD 43

Historic

Roman	43 - 410AD
Saxon/Early Medieval	410 - 1066AD
Medieval	1066 - 1485AD
Post Medieval	1486 - 1901AD
Modern	1901 - Present Day

Executive Summary

This heritage assessment has been undertaken for land at Rockfield Road, Monmouth. In accordance with Welsh Assembly policy (PPW), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the archaeological potential of the site.

This assessment has established that based on the results of the archaeological evaluation that was undertaken on the site in support of a previous planning application, the site has low potential for archaeological remains of all periods. Consequently, the proposed development will have no archaeological impacts and no further archaeological investigation is necessary either pre- or post-the determination of the current planning application.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage assessment considers land at Rockfield Road, Monmouth (Fig. 1). The proposed development comprises a residential scheme. The site is located at grid reference SO 495 134. The site is hereafter referred to as the study site.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk Based Assessments (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014), the assessment draws together available information on designated and non-designated heritage assets, topographic and land-use information so as to establish the potential for non-designated archaeological heritage assets within the study site and the setting and significance of nearby designated heritage assets. The assessment includes the results of a site survey, an examination of published and unpublished records and charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise.
- 1.3 This assessment is an update of an archaeological desk based assessment produced by CgMs in 2008. The archaeological and historical background is based on the results of this desk based assessment which has been updated and supplemented by the results of an archaeological evaluation of the site undertaken by Headland Archaeology in 2013 which is included as Appendix 1 of this assessment.
- 1.4 The underlying geology of the site is Raglan Mudstone Formation which is overlain by river terrace gravel deposits. The site lies at c. 27mOD.
- 1.5 The assessment enables relevant parties to assess the significance of archaeological assets on and close to the site and consider the potential for hitherto undiscovered archaeological assets, thus enabling potential impacts on assets to be identified along with the need for design, civil engineering or archaeological solutions.

2.0 Planning Background And Development Plan Framework

- 2.1 Where any development may have a direct or indirect effect on designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure the proposals are considered with due regard for their impact on the historic environment.

Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979

- 2.2 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended) protects the fabric of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, but does not afford statutory protection to their settings.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW)

- 2.3 Welsh Assembly policy in relation to the historic environment is outlined in Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) entitled Conserving the Historic Environment. This provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of the historic environment. Overall, in relation to archaeological remains. The objectives of Chapter 6 of the PPW can be summarised as:

- preserving or enhancing the historic environment, recognising its contribution to economic vitality and culture, civic pride and the quality of life, and its importance as a resource for future generations
- protecting archaeological remains, which are a finite and non-renewable resource, part of the historical and cultural identity of Wales, and valuable both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and the economy, particularly tourism

- 2.4 In relation to archaeological remains, Chapter 6 outlines that the desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining a planning application, whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled. Furthermore, where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings are likely to be affected by proposed development, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ. In cases involving lesser archaeological remains, local planning authorities will need to weigh the relative importance of archaeology against other factors, including the need for the proposed development.

- 2.5 If important remains are thought to exist, the planning authority should request the developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken. The results of any assessment and/or field evaluation should be provided as part of a planning application.

- 2.6 Where physical preservation in situ of archaeological remains is not justified, before granting planning permission the authority needs to be satisfied that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory provision for the archaeological investigation and subsequent recording of the remains and the publication of the results. Archaeological investigations should be carried out before development commences, working to a project brief prepared by the planning authority.

- 2.7 Local planning authorities may impose conditions to protect a monument and require that an archaeological watching brief is carried out. In order to secure the provision of an appropriate archaeological investigation and subsequent recording of remains, a negative condition may be imposed prohibiting the carrying out of the development until such time as works or other action (for example, an excavation), have been carried out by a third party.

- 2.8 Archaeological remains may only become apparent when development has commenced. Where such remains are deemed by the Welsh Government to be of national importance, the remains may be scheduled. In these circumstances, developers would need to seek separate Scheduled Monument Consent before continuing work.

- 2.9 Welsh Office Circular 60/96 'Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology' encourages early consultation on proposals, promotes the assessment of the archaeological implications of development proposals, provides guidance on the circumstances and scope of field evaluations, options for physical; preservation in situ and archaeological excavation and recording, and provides model conditions to secure archaeological objectives.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.10 The Monmouthshire County Council Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2021 (adopted on 27 February 2014), contains no policies directly dealing with archaeological remains.

Previous Planning Application

- 2.11 Outline planning permission was applied for in 2008 (ref: DC/2008/00576). This was appealed on non-determination grounds (appeal ref: APP/E6840/A/13/2195263). The appeal was dismissed on the grounds prematurity but not in relation to any of the technical details of the proposed scheme. In relation to archaeology, para 48 of the Inspector's report stated:

"A potential archaeological interest in the site was addressed by the submission of an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment as part of the planning application and a subsequent Archaeological Evaluation Report during the appeal process. Whilst the latter report indicated that the evidence of prehistoric activity on Parc Glyndwr had increased the potential for archaeological remains of this age to be present within the appeal site, no significant archaeological deposits or features were identified during the field evaluation. The report concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that Bronze Age activity identified at Parc Glyndwr extends into the appeal site. In addition, the field evaluation supported the conclusions of the desk-based assessment that the site has a low potential for archaeological remains for all periods. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary I have no reason to conclude otherwise."

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 The CgMs archaeological desk based assessment concluded that the study site was considered to have low archaeological potential for remains of all periods.
- 3.2 Prehistoric remains recorded within the area of the study site comprised of isolated lithic artefacts c. 700m to the south-west of the study site. Watching briefs undertaken during the construction of the housing estate to the south of the study site produced residual prehistoric flint flakes.
- 3.3 Excavations carried out by Monmouth Archaeology on the Parc Glyndwr development c. 400m to the south-west of the study site revealed alluvial sediments indicating the presence of a lake or marshy area dating to the Bronze Age period. Deposits within this feature included a number of 'burnt mound' type deposits. Cutting through the burnt mound deposits were parallel linear features, which are believed to relate to prehistoric boat building activity. Recent archaeological investigations associated with the on-going Wonastow Road development c. 800+ to the south west of the study site, have revealed the remains of seasonally occupied settlement of Bronze Age/Iron Age date that was on the shore of the former lake. The presence of these Bronze Age/Iron Age remains would indicate that the study site could have potential. However, the archaeological evaluation of the study site has established that no such remains are in fact present (see para 3.6 & 3.7).
- 3.4 Roman remains recorded within the vicinity of the study site comprises of residual pottery and iron slag recovered during archaeological investigations undertaken adjacent to the proposed development area. Evidence for small scale Roman iron working sites established for short periods are known within the wider Monmouth area.
- 3.5 The study site is located away from the medieval core of Monmouth. The map regression presented in the CgMs desk based assessment indicates that the site was in agricultural usage during this period and the post-Medieval period.

Results of the Archaeological Evaluation of the Study Site

- 3.6 In 2013, Headland Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation of the study site. This comprised the excavation of nine 50m x 2m trenches arranged so as to have a good geographic spread across the site. This was implemented in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that had been approved by Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT).
- 3.7 The evaluation trenching did not reveal any features of archaeological interest. A prehistoric flint flake was recorded that is considered to have been imported into the site at a later date and was not indicative of prehistoric activity. Industrial waste was recovered from the topsoil and subsoil deposits. It was concluded that this material was introduced through later manuring practices.
- 3.8 GGAT undertook a monitoring site visit on 13th June 2013 while the evaluation was being undertaken.

Conclusions on the Archaeological Potential of the Study Site

- 3.9 The archaeological evaluation has established that the conclusions of the desk based assessment were correct. That is, the site has low archaeological potential for remains of all archaeological periods.

4.0 Proposed Development and Predicted Impact on Heritage Assets

Site Conditions

The site comprises an agricultural field.

The Proposed Development

- 4.1 The proposed development comprises the construction of 130 dwellings, open space, a LEAP and landscaping (Fig. 2).

Potential Archaeological Impacts

- 4.2 The archaeological evaluation of the proposed development site has confirmed that the site has low potential for archaeological remains of all periods. As a consequence, the proposed development will have no archaeological impacts and no further archaeological work is necessary to support the proposed planning application or as conditional mitigation works.

5.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1 This heritage desk-based assessment considers land at Rockfield Road, Monmouth. In accordance with Welsh Assembly policy (PPW), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the archaeological potential of the site.
- 5.2 This assessment has established that based on the results of the archaeological evaluation that was undertaken on the site in support of a previous planning application, the site has low potential for archaeological remains of all periods. Consequently, the proposed development will have no archaeological impacts and no further archaeological investigation is necessary either pre- or post- the determination of the current planning application.