



CLASP

Community Landscape & Archaeology Survey Project

Please reply to Secretary of the Organising Committee:

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Danetre Village Proposed Development Archaeological Implications

1. Introduction

CLASP has been invited by WNDC to make comment from the Community based perspective on the archaeological implications of the subject Development. We have been provided with a copy of the Planning Application, including the Environmental Statement, by WNDC. Our comments will be passed to and discussed with Messrs EntecUK, the independent archaeological consultants employed by WNDC.

2. The Proposal

This Proposal relates to a significant development to the east of Borough Hill Daventry. To the north the proposal is bounded by the Daventry to Norton road and to the south by the A45 Daventry to Northampton road. To the west the boundary constitutes the boundaries of the Borough Hill and Burnt Walls scheduled monuments. To the east there appears to be no easily defined pre-existing boundary. The proposal is to build several thousand houses together with associated services in a phased development over a number of years, commencing at the southern end.

The Archaeological Report that accompanies the application appears to consist only of a desk based assessment carried out in 2005. This report is reflected into Chapter C of the Environmental Statement which makes observations as to the effect of the development but seems to make no specific recommendations regarding archaeological investigations during the development process.

CLASP, The Secretary, 21 Stacey Avenue, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5DN

Executive Committee: Alan Watson (Chair), Ruth Downie (Secretary), Angela Evans (Treasurer), Stephen Young (Archaeology Director), Nick Adams, David Banner, Jeremy Calderwood, Alan Priestley

Organising Committee: Jeremy Cooper (Acting Chair), Dave Hayward (Secretary), Julia Johns (Membership Secretary)

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It is further noted that neither does any fieldwork appear to have been done to support the archaeological report, nor by its date does it allow for any archaeological developments made in the area since 2005. No reference is made to a full aerial photography survey of the site. There is a mention of fieldwalking but it is not clear if this was undertaken in relationship to the current report or from the work of others.

The Environmental Statement does layout the different levels of importance for monuments etc., the levels of the individual known sites in the development area and the effect the development will have on them. There does however not appear to be any recommendations as to what course of action should be taken to mitigate the effects of the development work.

3. A Broader Synopsis

Since the desktop assessment was carried out in 2005 there has been a considerable amount of archaeological investigation work, principally none intrusive, carried out in the immediate area adjacent to the Danetre Village Proposals, especially at the northern end. This organisation, CLASP, has itself carried out several, geophysical surveys, fieldwalking and structured metal detecting exercises in the area, especially on the Bannaventa Roman British township and other sites to the west of Norton Village. Additionally fieldwork has been carried by archaeologists commissioned by the neighbouring Churchfields development. The relevant work here has been geophysical survey on land virtually co-terminus with the Danetre site at its northern end. Other work has been carried out in connection with other development areas to the northwest of Danetre, namely at Middlemoor and Monksmoor. These latter two have revealed Bronze/Iron age settlement and Iron Age/Romano-British agricultural activity and settlement.

CLASP takes the view that all of this work, combined with the existing knowledge of significant activity immediately adjacent to the site at Borough Hill and Bannaventa enhances the significance of the archaeology in the Danetre area. With an in depth archaeological investigation of all sites there is currently a one off opportunity to establish a comprehensive picture of the archaeology. There is a need to establish the relationships between the activity on each of the development areas and that elsewhere in the area. This will hopefully enable a credible picture being obtained of the inhabitants and the economic activity of the wider area together with a definition of the relationship of the hinterland with Borough Hill and Bannaventa.

4. Further Work Prior to Decision.

Considering the points discussed in Section 3 above it might be appropriate before any decision is made on these proposals for the developers to be required to undertake further work to update and substantiate the Desk Top Assessment.

Owing to the identification by geophysical survey of activity in fields immediately to the north of the Danetre application, the developers should be required to carry out a similar survey in the fields included in the application to the south of the Daventry - Norton road. This would hopefully establish whether that activity was more extensive than what is currently known and possibly it's relationship to the nearby Romano-British activity on the northern end of Borough Hill. If this initial survey reveals activity then there may be a need to enlarge the survey area to establish the full extent of the archaeology. Consideration needs to be also given to having geophysical surveys carried out in the immediate areas of archaeological activity within the developmental area and possibly on that land immediately adjacent to the important scheduled monument sites adjoining the proposed development.

It would also be beneficial if a full aerial photographic analysis of the whole developmental area was undertaken to establish the presence of any sites that may have not been previously identified.

We feel that the report as it is underestimates the landscape archaeological potential of the area as a whole. To our view this is important as, in conjunction with the report on the other neighbouring developments at Churchfields and Monksmoor and our own work at Bannaventa the whole landscape of the area is of significance at least regionally, if not nationally. It is also questioned whether the report reflects the brief given to them by the County Archaeologist when it is compared with those prepared for the Churchfields and Monksmoor developments.

5. Archaeological Mitigation

If it is agreed that further archaeological assessment work is required prior to any decision regarding the application being made, it is difficult at this stage to make full suggestions as to mitigating work. As previously discussed in Section 3 above we consider there is need to exploit any archaeological feature to it's

full to glean as much information as possible about its purpose, date and reason for final demise. We would suggest therefore that a full excavation is made of any feature that is not an obvious field boundary. Any early field boundaries that may be located should be subjected to limited trial trenching to establish date and style.

We would suggest that a proactive watching brief be maintained on the site at all stages of development. Any archaeological feature located during construction should be subjected to appropriate investigation.

All finds located during the work must, where appropriate, be subjected to proper conservation and identification. Arrangements must be made for subsequent archiving.

If an appropriate site is found during the development work it will hopefully be left exposed and conserved as an attraction for local people. This can only be good for achieving a sense of identity and heritage in a previously undeveloped area.