



**Community
Landscape
Archaeology
Survey
Project**

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Submission to Planning Appeal – APP/Z2830/W/16/3146908

Appellants Name: Messrs Gladmans Developments

Location: Land off Weedon Road Nether Heyford

Description of Works: Residential development of up to 95 dwellings including access and infrastructure works with all other matters reserved (outline).

Archaeological Considerations

Introduction

CLASP is a community based archaeological registered charity based in west Northamptonshire, our principal work is investigating, interpreting and recording the Romano-British landscape over the area. We are also undertaking work in both later and earlier eras. More information about us can be seen through our website www.claspweb.org.uk

CLASP makes no comment on the validity of this planning application, we only wish to ensure that the local archaeological heritage is probably investigated, interpreted and recorded.

This submission is in addition to the original submission made by this charity to the original planning application and must be taken in conjunction with that submission. Since the date of submission of the original submission the availability of a research facility called LIDAR has increased as a result of the UK Government making all LIDAR records held by them free to all.

LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging), is a method of identifying features on the land surface that are, in some cases, not visible to the eye. In simplistic terms this is achieved by laser signals from an overflying aircraft being aimed at the land surface, the return signals being received and interpreted into easily 'read' pictures of the land surface.

As a result of this availability of LIDAR data CLASP has researched a significant proportion of its area of interest, including the geographical area subject to this current Appeal. This research has identified apparent previously unknown probable archaeological features that warrant in depth examination both in the Nether Heyford area and elsewhere.

In addition to the LIDAR evidence a further examination of Google Earth images reveals a significant feature in the north-east corner of the field before the Bliss Close development was constructed. This development appears to have destroyed 75% of this feature but some may remain in the area subject to the current Appeal.

The Lidar Evidence

Attached to this submission, as annexures, are four separate lidar images that look at the area of the proposed development each with the Sun illuminating it from different angles. As a result of this each view provides a different emphasis of the site. Taking a combined view of these images two linear features, approximately aligned on a north to south axis are clearly visible. These are discussed in depth later within this submission.

Also visible is an east to west feature, that appears on either side of the canal but is not cut by it, again this will be discussed later.

The North to South Linear Features.

It is submitted that these are of significant antiquity. An examination of the attached LIDAR images, taken as a combined view indicate two, roughly parallel features aligned on a roughly north to south axis. At their northern terminus, adjacent to Weedon Lane, they appear to be some 100m apart whereas at the southern end they appear to have widened to roughly 200m apart.

These features predate the late 18th C canal, being cut by it. They have no correlation with known field boundaries, in fact their overall length and spacing are not typical of other field boundaries either pre or post enclosure in this area. The canal was constructed at the very end of the 18th C with field enclosure in this area taking place in the middle of that Century. 19th C auction maps for this area provide no evidence as to these alignments. There is no obvious evidence of ridge and furrow on lidar or aerial photographs. The Atlas of Northamptonshire is silent on Nether Heyford.¹ As was mentioned in the original submission to the Planning Application, Google Earth 24th May 2009 view covering the relevant area illustrates two parallel parch marks that match the northern end of the two longer parallel marks identified by LIDAR. (The Google Earth image is attached for ease of understanding as Annexure 6)

What do these linear marks represent and what age are they? It is important to look at the wider landscape and it will be noticed that one imposing feature across the area is the Romano-British influence. The site of the proposed development is sandwiched between two significant villas from that era, Whitehall and Horestone. A feature of these villas generally is that they tend to have agricultural estates associated with them. Archaeological investigations and research still being carried out have identified evidence that probably extensive sheep farming was associated with Whitehall; there is also an unexplained large collection of hare bones, probably one of the largest in Britain.

It does seem that there is not a consistent pattern for the field system associated with these villas. There is evidence that in parts of England there were long linear fields on these estates. Finberg in the *Agrarian History of England and Wales Vol 1.ii* pp 195 describes linear fields, albeit not as long as those shown at Whitehall, at Grassington. He mentions that these fields were bounded by substantive banks.² Further mention of long fields during the later part of the Romano-British era is also made by Taylor in *Fields in the English Landscape* describing linear fields evolving, pp 51, with an example at Martin Down, Hampshire illustrated at Fig 4b. Taylor further mentions that these fields were bounded by banks.³ Very similar fields with pronounced banks are illustrated by Hoskins in *The Making of the English Landscape* at Fyfield Down near Marlborough pp 24 & 25⁴, albeit he does describe these as Celtic having assimilated smaller earlier Bronze Age fields. There is evidence, as mentioned both in the Appellants original Archaeological Report and in CLASP's original submission of Celtic (Iron Age) and Bronze Age activity in this immediate area although no direct evidence of Bronze Age field structure. A copy of Hoskins Plate 4 is included as Annexure 5. It must be noted that the slightly tapering larger, linear field is similar to the LIDAR marks described above.

An east - west feature at right angles to the linear features at the northerly end, shown in Annexure 4 is almost certainly the course of a trackway that previously crossed the canal at its westerly end and again post dates the north - south linear features. This crossing was only demolished in the 1930's when the canal was widened. The bank leading to the demolished canal bridge is still visible today. The LIDAR reflects the same feature in the field on the opposite side of

1 *An Atlas of Northamptonshire-The Medieval and Early Modern Landscape*; Tracey Partida, David Hall and Glenn Foard: Oxbow Books 2013.

2 *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol 1-ii AD 43-1042*; Finberg, H.P.R: Cambridge University Press 1972

3 *Fields in the English Landscape*; Taylor, C: First Published by J.M. Dent & Sons 1975

4 *The Making of the English Landscape*; Hoskins, W. G. Prof: Hodder and Stoughton 1955

the canal.

Summary

CLASP considers that the north - south linear marks referred to in the above paragraphs reflect substantive boundaries, probably banks, of an earlier field system. Considering the Romano-British influence in the immediate area these features may originate from that era. Conversely they may have earlier origins. The existence of these features is corroborated at their northern end in satellite imagery.

Possible large oval feature.

An examination of the Google Earth satellite image, Annexure 6, reveals an elongated oval feature in the north – east corner of the field. This apparent feature is difficult to define in places, it does appear to post-date the previously discussed linear features. Unfortunately a large proportion of this feature will have been destroyed by the recent Bliss Close development which is not reflected on either the LIDAR or satellite imagery. The south-westerly part of this feature should be outwith Bliss Close and remain in the area proposed for this development.

Requested Condition on Planning if Appeal is Successful

As no mention of these linear features is noted in the Archaeological Section of the developers Environmental Statement CLASP would ask, that if the Appeal is allowed, the following conditions be imposed prior to any construction work commencing:-

A - A full geophysical survey of the area is performed. The purpose of this being to:-

- 1. Confirm the position of the linear features discussed.**
- 2. Confirm the position and nature of any remaining elements of the oval feature.**
- 3. Identify any other features that may be extant.**

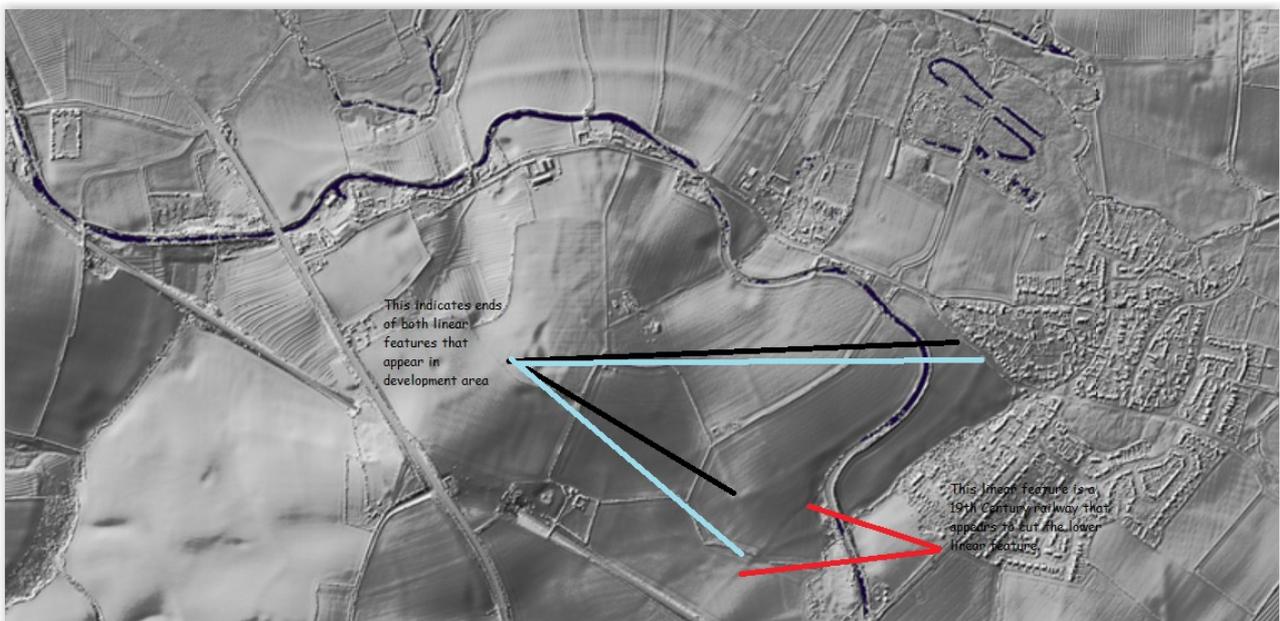
B - CLASP would further ask that the developer be required to commission an appropriate level of archaeological excavation to investigate the linear features, sufficient to determine age, purpose and nature. Further excavation should be required of the oval area for the same purpose and also any other features that may be located as a result of the geophysical survey.

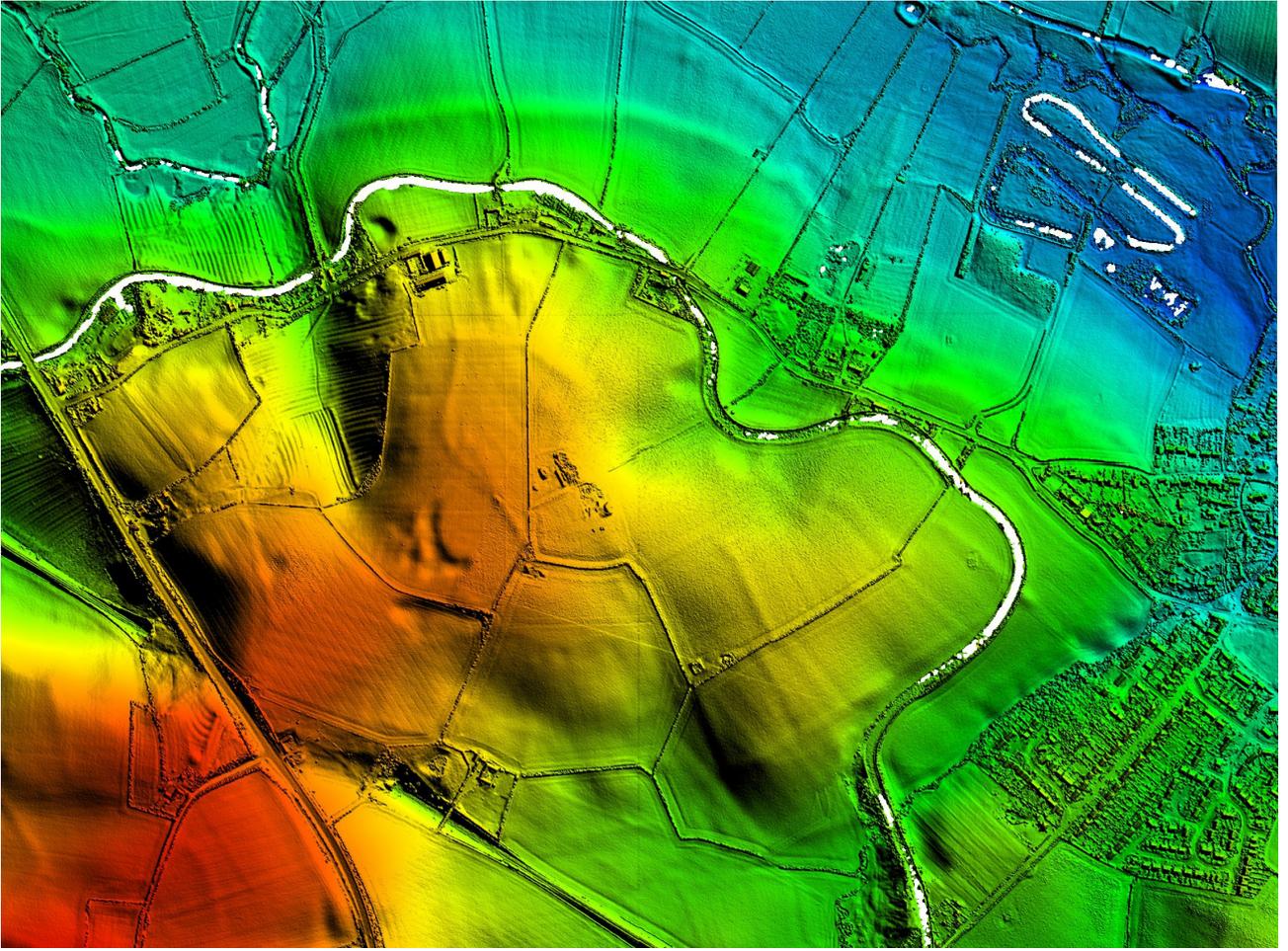
C -If these excavations are sufficiently revealing the results should be shared with the local community by way of a presentation to the community, including CLASP. CLASP would further ask that we are kept apprised of the situation as the archaeological work progresses.

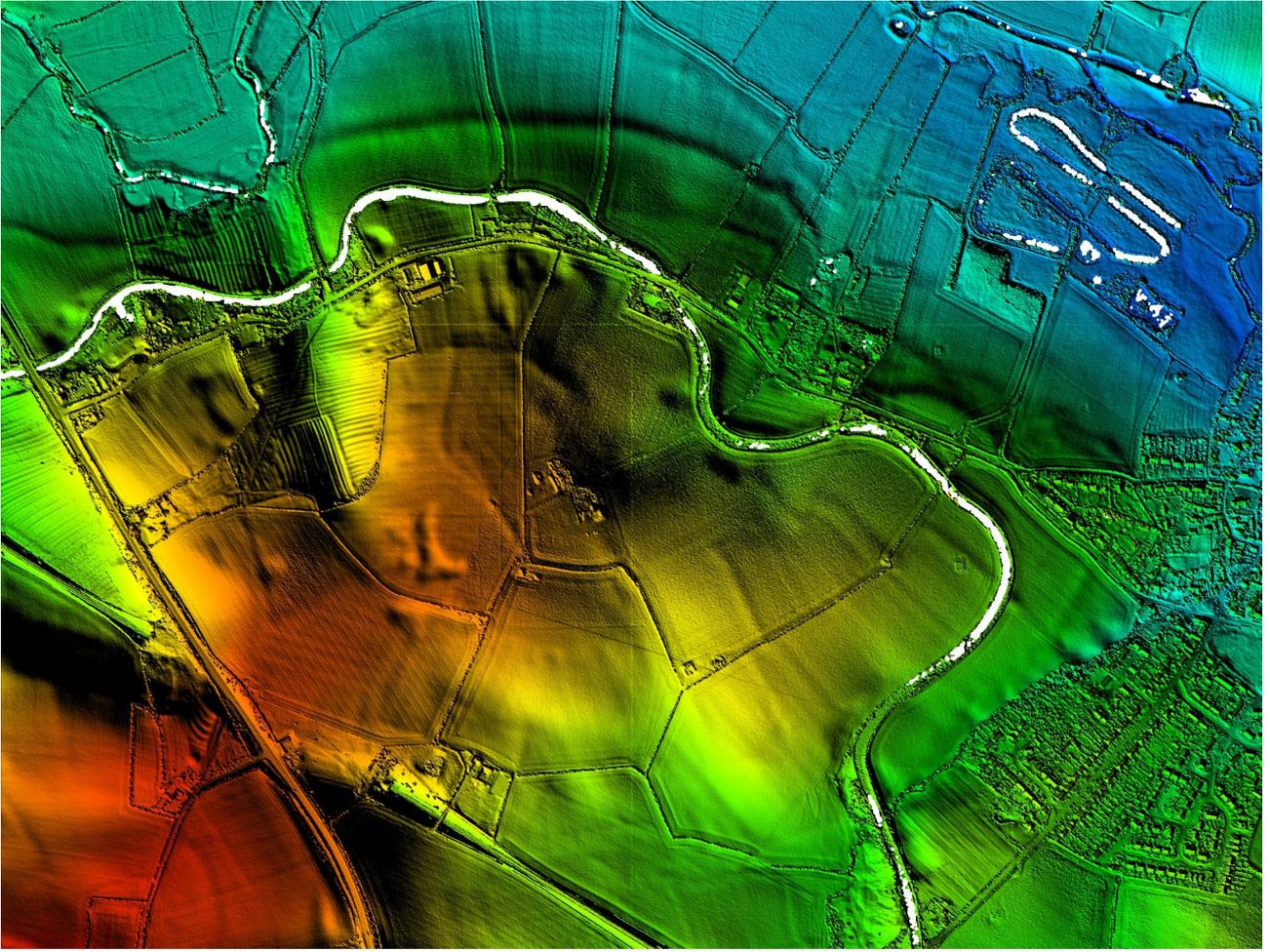
D. F. Hayward MBE
Chair of Trustees

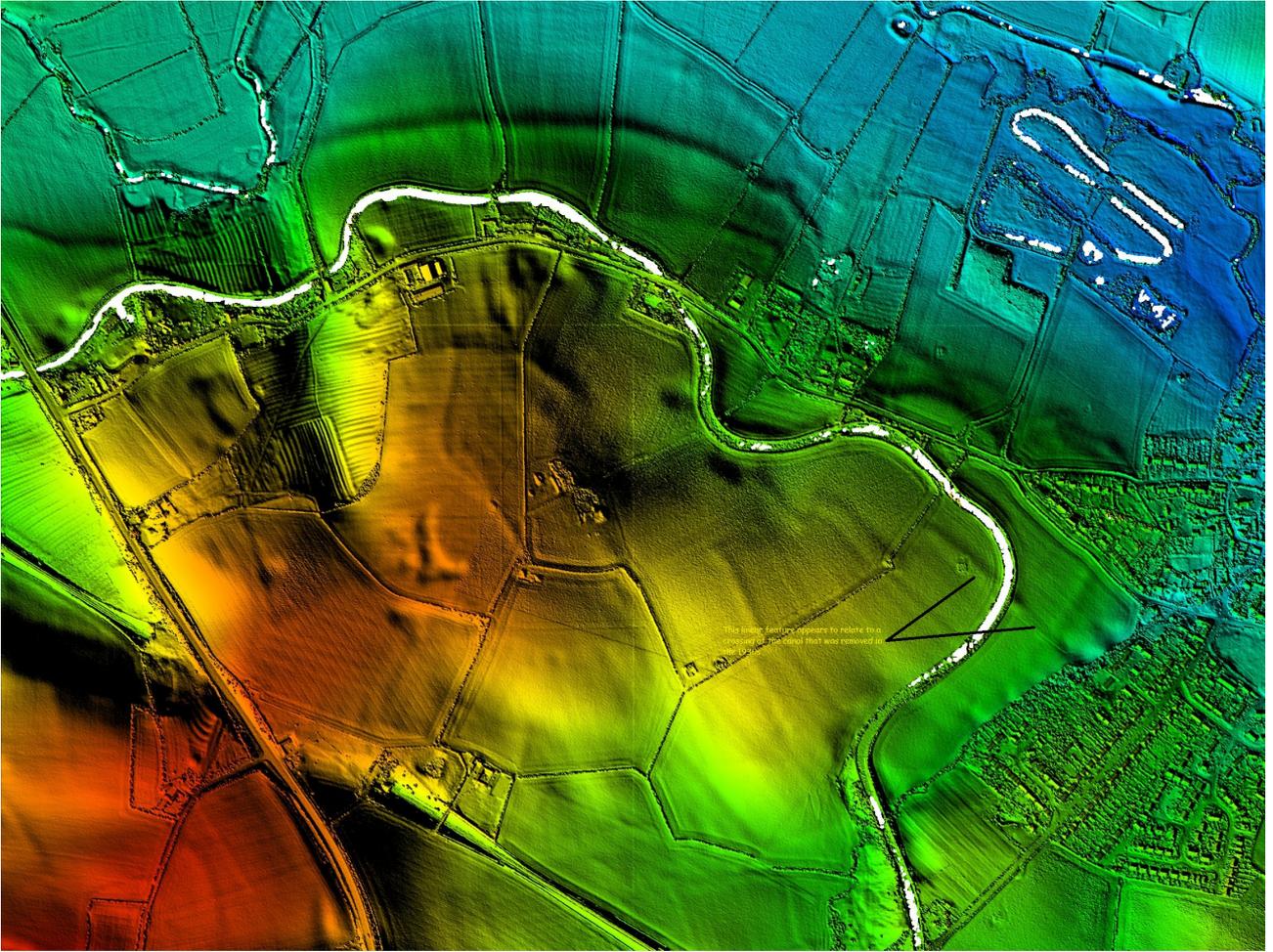
Annexure List

- Annexure 1 – Annotated greyscale LIDAR image of area
- Annexure 2 – Enhanced LIDAR image with sun at due NE
- Annexure 3 – Enhanced LIDAR image with sun at due SW
- Annexure 4 - Annotated enhanced LIDAR image with sun at SW
- Annexure 5 - Plate 4 – The Making of the English Landscape
- Annexure 6 – Annotated Google Earth 2009 satellite imagery









THE LANDSCAPE

