ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

LAND OFF LIGHTWOOD ROAD
YOXALL
STAFFORDSHIRE

January 2015
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This desk-based assessment considers land approximately 7.36 hectares in extent off Lightwood Road, Yoxall, Staffordshire.

In accordance with government policy (National Planning Policy Framework), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage significance and archaeological potential of the site.

The available HER evidence does not record any assets within the site boundary and there is limited prehistoric, Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeological evidence in its surroundings. Therefore, the potential for as yet to be discovered archaeological assets is considered to be low/nil.

Yoxall Conservation Area, two Grade II* and forty-six Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surroundings of the site, but are all in an urban or semi-urban context with views into and from it either blocked by modern development or situated at sufficient distance from the site so that no impact upon their settings or significance is expected.

The assessment has also considered the potential for as yet to be discovered archaeological assets and concludes that there is low/nil potential for evidence from the prehistoric, Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval periods.

Despite the low/nil archaeological potential of the site, it is possible that the archaeological advisor to the local Planning Authority may request some further archaeological work. Should this be the case, it is suggested that any such work can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.
1.0 **INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY**

1.1 This desk-based assessment has been researched and prepared by Emily Mercer and Paul Chadwick of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd.

1.2 The assessment examines a site, also referred to as the study site, off Lightwood Road, Yoxall, Staffordshire (Figure 1).

1.3 The study site is approximately 7.36 hectares in extent and divided into three fields (Plates 1-5). To the west of the site are arable and pasture fields, and to the north is a playing field and recreation ground. The site is bounded by modern residential development to the east (Plates 6 and 7) and Bondfield Lane to the south. To the north-east and east is the village of Yoxall. The site is centred at National Grid Reference SK 1382 1863 (Figure 1).

1.4 In accordance with government policy (National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF]) this assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage significance and archaeological potential of the site.

1.5 Additionally, in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments (Institute of Archaeologists 1999 [revised 2012]), the assessment includes the results of a site inspection (2\textsuperscript{nd} June 2014), an examination of published and unpublished records, and charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise.

1.6 An initial pre-application consultation has been undertaken with Stephen Dean (Principal Archaeologist, Staffordshire County Council), although no response had been received prior to issuing this report, and Suzy Blake (Historic Environment Record Officer, Staffordshire County Council).

1.7 As a result, the assessment enables relevant parties to assess the significance of heritage/archaeological assets on and close to the site and considers 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 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). More recently (March 2014) the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been published online.

2.1.1 Section 12 of the NPPF, entitled ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 12 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:

- Delivery of sustainable development
- Understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment
- Conservation of England’s heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance and
- Recognition of the value that heritage makes to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

2.1.2 Section 12 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. Paragraph 128 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset, and that level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to review the potential effect of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.

2.1.3 Heritage assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

*A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.*

They include designated heritage assets (as defined in the NPPF) and assets identified by the Local Planning Authority.
2.1.4 Annex 2 also defines archaeological interest as:

A heritage asset which holds or potentially could hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

2.1.5 A designated heritage asset comprises a:

World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area.

2.1.6 Significance is defined as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.

2.1.7 In short, government policy provides a framework which:

- Protects nationally important designated heritage assets (which comprise World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas)
- Protects the settings of such designations
- In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from desk-based assessment and where necessary field evaluation) to enable informed decisions and
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not significant enough to merit in-situ preservation.

2.2 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current development plan policy and by other material considerations.
2.3 The relevant development plan framework is provided by the ‘saved’ policies in the East Staffordshire Local Plan 2006. However, none of these policies relate to archaeology or heritage.

2.4 There are no designated (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields) or non-designated assets recorded within the study site boundary.

2.5 There are forty-eight Listed Buildings in the surroundings of the site. All, except for two Grade II* Listed Buildings (08652 and 11032 on Figure 2), are Grade II Listed. The majority are within the Yoxall Conservation Area, which is c. 110 m to the east (Figure 2). The nearest Listed Building outside the Conservation Area is Morrey House, a Grade II Listed Building (08672 on Figure 2) located c. 520 m to the west.

2.6 All the Listed Buildings are either within an urban or semi-urban context, with views into the site either blocked by surrounding buildings (Plates 6 and 7), or located at a sufficient distance from it so that no impact upon their settings or significance is anticipated (Plate 8). Consequently, they will not be discussed further.

2.7 In accordance with NPPF, the assessment will also consider non-designated assets and the potential of the study site to contain as yet to be discovered archaeological assets.
3.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 Geology

3.1.1 The underlying solid geology of the study site consists of Mercian Mudstone, overlain by Mid Pleistocene Diamicton Till (formerly known as Boulder Clay).

3.2 Topography

3.2.1 The site is an approximate reverse-L shape and comprises three fields; the southern field is arable (Plates 1-3) and the north and central field are under pasture and used to grow hay or silage (Plates 4-5).

3.2.2 The site is situated in an area of undulating topography, although it is generally positioned on an east-facing slope (Plates 4-7). Levels across the site grade gently from c. 75 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) on its western boundary, to c. 65 m AOD in the south-east corner.

3.2.3 A derelict agricultural building, that appears to have been used as a cattle shed, is positioned on the east side of the central field (Plates 9 and 10).
4.0 **ARCHAEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The timescales used in this report are as follows:

**Prehistoric**
- *Palaeolithic*: 450,000 - 12,000 BC
- *Mesolithic*: 12,000 - 4,000 BC
- *Neolithic*: 4,000 - 1,800 BC
- *Bronze Age*: 1,800 - 600 BC
- *Iron Age*: 600 - AD 43

**Historic**
- *Roman*: AD 43 - 410
- *Saxon/Early Medieval*: AD 410 - 1066
- *Medieval*: AD 1066 - 1485
- *Post-Medieval*: AD 1486 - 1800
- *Modern*: AD 1800 - Present

4.1 **Introduction**

4.1.1 The Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) contains information relating to all known archaeological and historical sites in the area. A search radius of 1 km around the study site was undertaken. A plan showing the distribution of HER entries is shown on Figure 2.

4.1.2 Data from the Historic Environment Character Assessment (Staffordshire County Council 2013) was consulted. This identified the site as being 'Post 1880s Reorganised Piecemeal Enclosure'. The term refers to the reorganising of the landscape due to changes in agricultural practices of this period, but within early field patterns. These field patterns differ from purely planned fields due to the survival of earlier field boundaries which fossilise their origins as 'Piecemeal Enclosure'.

4.1.3 The Staffordshire County Record Office and William Salt Library were also consulted in order to examine historic maps and documentation relating to the site.
4.1.4 There are no designated or non-designated assets on the site. Non-designated assets (i.e. archaeological finds and features) in the wider study area are reviewed below, and their locations shown on Figure 2.

4.1.5 This chapter reviews existing archaeological evidence for the site and the archaeological/historical background of the general area and, in accordance with NPPF, considers the potential for as yet undiscovered archaeological evidence on the site.

4.1.6 Chapter 5 subsequently considers the site conditions and whether the theoretical potential identified in this chapter is likely to survive.

4.2 **Prehistoric**

4.2.1 There are no recorded prehistoric archaeological assets on or within the immediate vicinity of the study site.

4.2.2 The earliest prehistoric archaeological evidence recorded on the HER in the surroundings of the site are dated to the Bronze Age and include: three ring ditches recorded as cropmarks and interpreted as the remains of burial mounds c. 700 m to the south-east of the site (01510 on Figure 2); wood (some of which has been worked) was found during excavations of a meander on the River Trent c. 930 m to the south-west of the site (40271 on Figure 2); and a Cremation Cemetery (containing 40 urns), c. 345 m to the north of the site (00937 on Figure 2). The description of the Cemetery led to it being attributed to the Bronze Age, although there is the possibility that it could be either Roman or Saxon.

4.2.3 Two Iron Age linch pin finds, uncovered during metal detecting, are located c. 370 m to the south-west and c. 680 m to the north of the site (60452 and 60450 respectively, on Figure 2). Other undated evidence of possible prehistoric date includes the discovery of four pit-like features containing fire-cracked pebbles and charcoal c. 570 m south-west of the site (05065 on Figure 2). Furthermore, place-name evidence of ‘Barrow Moor’ and ‘Barrow Pringle’ c. 580 m south of the site suggest that there was once a late prehistoric barrow (56728 on Figure 2).

4.2.4 The available evidence suggests that there has been some prehistoric activity in the wider surroundings of the site, but none in its vicinity. Therefore, the potential for archaeological remains of prehistoric date within the site is considered to be low/nil.
4.3 **Roman**

4.3.1 There is no Roman evidence within the study site.

4.3.2 Evidence for activity during the Roman period within the surroundings of the study site is limited to a findspot of a Roman brooch of Polden Hill type, which is recorded c. 970 m to the north-west of the site (61103 on Figure 2).

4.3.3 No other evidence of Roman activity is known in the wider surroundings of the site. Therefore, given the paucity of archaeological evidence, it is considered that the site has nil potential.

4.4 **Saxon/Medieval**

4.4.1 There are no recorded archaeological assets of Saxon/Medieval date within the study site boundary.

4.4.2 The settlement of Yoxall (02612 on Figure 2) is of Early Medieval origin, extant at the time of Domesday and recorded as ‘Locheshale’. It was one of fifteen settlements forming the Lichfield Manor held by the Bishop of Chester. The Bishop’s estate was a compact area between the Trent and Tame Valleys and the Roman road junction at Wall, and it may represent an earlier Anglian or even Romano-British estate. The settlement was not listed individually in Domesday so little is known about the number of households or its resources, except that there was land sufficient for four ploughs and it was held by Rafwin and Alwin.

4.4.3 The origin of the name of Yoxall is unclear. It is believed to derive from the Old English ‘geoc’, which has several meanings but is likely to relate to a ‘yoke of oxen’ or the area that could be ploughed by a pair of oxen (approximately a quarter of an acre). An alternative interpretation is that of a name of a person of Scandinavian origin, ‘Jokell’ abbreviated to ‘Joke’. ‘Halh’ is thought to be Old English for a ‘small valley’ or an area of ‘low-lying land near the river’.

4.4.4 During the 14th century Yoxall was known to be a conglomerate of several settlements, with the Grade II* Listed Church of St Peter (08652 on Figure 2) thought to be the focus: Reeve End to the north-west of the church; Smelles or Snelles End (now Snail’s End) to the far north; Bridge End, thought to be near Town Hill; and Bond End to the south. In the wider landscape, Yoxall was a focus for the surrounding dispersed
settlement, comprising a small number of hamlets, such as Morrey to the south-west, Woodhouses to the east and Hadley End to the north-west, having been granted a market in 1300.

4.4.5 The Medieval Manor House was located c. 375 m to the east of the site (00934 on Figure 2); the substantial earthworks of the rectangular moat are still evident. There are also two extant timber-framed cottages from the 14\textsuperscript{th} century in the village (Grade II Listed Reeve End Cottage and Grade II* Pear Tree Farmhouse, 03196 and 08655 on Figure 2 respectively).

4.4.6 Evidence of ridge and furrow from this period is extensive in the surroundings of the site (e.g. c. 370 m to the north [53978 on Figure 2]; c. 567 m to the south [05517 on Figure 2]; c. 660 m to the east [20189 on Figure 2]; c. 680 m to the south-west [20187 on Figure 2]), with an area also recorded from aerial photography in the field immediately to the north of the site (53977 on Figure 2). These are likely to have originated as open fields during the Medieval period.

4.4.7 Although adjacent to an area of ridge and furrow, there is no evidence to suggest a similar agricultural use for the study site, and the potential for archaeological remains is therefore considered to be low/nil.

4.5 Post-Medieval/Modern (including map regression exercise)

4.5.1 There are no recorded archaeological assets of Post-Medieval/Modern date within the site.

4.5.2 In the surroundings of the site, there are many assets recorded on the HER; however, most of these relate to Listed Buildings or have no relevance to the site, other than to set it within the context of the rural, mainly agricultural, settlement of Yoxall.

4.5.3 By the mid-17\textsuperscript{th} century, agricultural improvements led to the open fields of the Medieval period surrounding Yoxall gradually being enclosed by individual landowners which resulted in ‘Piecemeal Enclosure’ field patterns. This is evident from the field boundaries, some of which still fossilise the S-shape curves from the open fields. These are positioned alongside the later straightened field boundaries, such as those within the site boundaries, relating to the changes in agricultural management with a greater emphasis on pasture to facilitate dairy farming. To the west of Yoxall, the
post-war period saw the removal of field boundaries to facilitate increased arable production, including some of those now removed from the study site.

4.5.4 The hamlets originating from at least the Medieval period surrounding Yoxall, such as Morrey, Woodhouses, and Weaverslake continued as clusters of farmsteads through into the Modern period. Yoxall also remained relatively unchanged until the 20th century when small residential estates were developed around the historic core or as infill. An example of such infill is the modern residential estate abutting the eastern perimeter of the site, developed during the later 20th century along the western side of the main north/south route through the village comprising Main Street and Bond End. This served to incorporate the hamlet of Bond End into the village of Yoxall.

4.5.5 Yoxall is recorded on early county maps, such as Speed’s and Kip’s maps of 1610 (not shown) as ‘Yoxhall’. Bowen’s map of 1749 (not shown) shows ‘Yoxall’ with the Church of St Peter to the north.

4.5.6 The first available map to show the layout of the village and the location of the study site is Yates’ map of 1798 (Figure 3).

4.5.7 The Parish Plan of Yoxall, dated to 1803 (Figure 4), is the first available map to show the study site in detail, and depicts the site comprising six east/west-aligned fields, one of which (field ‘464’) extends beyond the eastern perimeter of the site. The mixed nature of the patterning of field boundaries from Piecemeal Enclosure is evident.

4.5.8 The Yoxall Tithe map of 1839 (Figure 5) shows no change to the site. The map is worn in places and the apportionment numbering is difficult to decipher in places. Nevertheless, it would seem that the fields within the site boundary were either pasture or meadow.

4.5.9 The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1882 (Figure 6) shows little change to the site, with the difference being that the long field that had previously run east beyond the eastern boundary of the site has now been divided, correlating with the present day boundary. Three ponds are marked within the study site boundary.

4.5.10 The Ordnance Survey 1923 edition (Figure 7) shows no change to the site.

4.5.11 The Ordnance Survey map of 1974-5 (Figure 8) shows some change to the site. A field boundary has been removed and the site now comprises five fields. Only one pond is marked and a drain is noted along a field boundary. A building is also shown on the east side of the site with a shelter or outbuilding on its west side. An additional
building is marked in the north-west corner of the site. The eastern perimeter of the site is bounded by modern residential development.

4.5.12 The site remains relatively unchanged on the Ordnance Survey 1994 edition (Figure 9), although a field boundary and the shelter or outbuilding have been removed. The site now consists of four fields.

4.5.13 The drain in the south-western corner of the site is no longer extant on the Ordnance Survey 2014 edition (Figure 10). The site now comprises three fields. The building in the north-west corner has been removed.

4.5.14 Historic map evidence illustrates that the site has been an area of enclosed agricultural land since at least the turn of the 19th century. In light of the above, it is therefore considered that the potential for archaeological remains of Post-Medieval and Modern date within the site is low/nil.

4.6 **Assessment of Significance**

4.6.1 There are no designated assets (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields) within the study site boundary.

4.6.2 Two Grade II* and forty-six Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surroundings of the site, many of which are within the Yoxall Conservation Area along Bond End and Main Street to the east. All the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area are situated sufficiently far enough away from the site or within an urban context wherein views into and from the site are blocked by surrounding buildings, so that no impact upon their settings or significance is expected as a result of the proposed development.

4.6.3 The available HER evidence does not record any assets within the site boundary for any archaeological period; although there is limited prehistoric, Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeological evidence in its surroundings. Therefore, the potential for as yet to be discovered archaeological assets from all archaeological periods is considered to be low/nil.
5.0 SITE CONDITIONS, THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS ON HERITAGE ASSETS

5.1 Site Conditions

5.1.1 A site visit was undertaken on 2\textsuperscript{nd} June 2014. The study site is approximately 7.36 hectares in extent, and slopes gently eastwards from c. 75 m AOD on the western perimeter of the study site to c. 65m AOD in the south-east corner.

5.1.2 The site is located in an area of 'Post 1880s Reorganised Piecemeal Enclosure' (Staffordshire County Council 2013) and currently comprises three fields with mature hedged boundaries. The northern and central fields are pasture fields used for growing hay or silage, and the southern field is arable.

5.1.3 A derelict agricultural building is located to the east side of the central field.

5.2 The Proposed Development

5.2.1 It is proposed that the study site will comprise residential-led development.

5.3 Impacts on Heritage Assets

5.3.1 The assessment has considered that development of the study site would not impact on any designated assets (Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields).

5.3.2 Although Yoxall Conservation Area, two Grade II* and forty-six Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the surroundings of the site they are all in an urban or semi-urban context with views into and from it either blocked by modern development or situated at sufficient distance from the site so that no impact upon their settings or significance is expected.

5.3.3 This assessment has considered the potential for as yet to be discovered archaeological assets and concludes that there is low/nil potential for evidence from the prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval periods.
6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment considers the archaeological potential of land approximately 7.36 hectares in extent off Lightwood Road, Yoxall, Staffordshire.

6.2 In accordance with government policy (National Planning Policy Framework), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage significance and archaeological potential of the site.

6.3 The assessment concludes that development of the site would not impact any designated assets (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields).

6.4 It has also considered the potential for as yet to be discovered archaeological assets and concludes that there is low/nil potential for evidence from the prehistoric, Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval periods.

6.5 Despite the low/nil archaeological potential of the site, it is possible that the archaeological advisor to the local Planning Authority may request some further archaeological work. Should this be the case, it is suggested that any such work can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.
**SOURCES CONSULTED**

1. **General**

Stephen Dean: Principal Archaeologist, Staffordshire County Council  
Suzy Blake: Historic Environment Record Officer, Staffordshire County Council  
Staffordshire County Record Office  
Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER)  
William Salt Library

2. **Bibliographic**


3. **Cartographic**

1798 Yates’ Map  
1803 Parish Plan of Yoxall
1839  Yoxall Tithe Map
1882  Ordnance Survey Map
1923  Ordnance Survey Map
1974-5 Ordnance Survey Map
1994  Ordnance Survey Map
2014  Ordnance Survey Map

4. **Website**

Archaeological Data Service - *ads.ahds.ac.uk*
English Heritage: The National Heritage List for England - *list.english-heritage.org.uk*
Heritage Gateway - *www.heritagegateway.org.uk*
MAGIC - *www.magic.gov.uk*
Staffordshire County Council – *www.staffordshire.gov.uk*
Staffordshire Past Track - *www.staffspasttrack.org.uk*
West Midlands Regional Research Framework for Archaeology - *www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/historycultures/departments/caha/research/arch-research/wmrrfa/index.aspx*
Figure 1: Site location

Legend

- Site Location
Figure 2: HER data plot

Lightwood Road, Yoxall

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Figure 3: 1798 Yates’ map of Staffordshire
Figure 5: 1839 Yoxall Tithe Map
Lightwood Road, Yoxall

Figure 6:
1882 Ordnance Survey Map

Legend
- Site Boundary
Figure 8: 1974-1975 Ordnance Survey Map

Legend
- Site Boundary
Figure 9: 1994 Ordnance Survey Map
Plate 1: View eastwards towards Lightwood Road over the southern field under crop

Plate 2: West-facing view over the south-western field under crop
Plate 3: View over the southern arable field from the north-west corner towards the south of the site, south of Bondfield Lane

Plate 4: North-facing view over the central field
Plate 5: View westwards over the northern field

Plate 6: View over the northern field towards the Conservation Area, blocked by modern residential development
Plate 7: East-facing view over the central field towards Lightwood Road. Views into the Conservation Area are blocked by modern residential development.

Plate 8: View westwards from the north-east corner of the southern field towards the location of Grade II Listed Building, Morrey House.
Plate 9: The agricultural building in the central field, facing south-east

Plate 10: South-facing view of the interior of the agricultural building