

Land off Knowls Lane, Oldham, Greater Manchester  
Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation  
May 2021

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**Report**

Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation

**Site**

Land off Knowls Lane, Oldham, Greater Manchester

**Date**

May 2021

**Planning Authority**

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

**Approximate Site Centre**

NRG SD 96043 04181

**Prepared and Approved By**

Dr Robert Smith (CMIfA)

**Report Status**

Final

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## 1.0 Introduction

### Background and Scope of Document

- 1.1 This Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the development of land off Knowls Lane, Oldham, Greater Manchester has been researched and prepared by Dr Robert Smith (Director, Orion Heritage Ltd) on behalf of Russell Homes UK Ltd.
- 1.2 A planning application has been submitted and approved by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (Planning Application Reference: PA/343269/19) for:

*A Hybrid Planning Application comprising of: Part A - Full Planning Application for the development of a new link road between Knowls Lane and Ashbrook Road and associated works, and Part B - Outline Planning Application for the development of up to 265 dwellings, open space and landscaping, with all matters reserved except for access. - Re-submission of Planning Application PA/340887/17.*

- 1.3 An archaeological condition (condition 14) was placed upon consent of the application. The condition is as follows:

*No demolition shall commence until:*

- a) *A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and,*
- b) *The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.*

*Reason: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.*

- 1.4 This WSI has been prepared in response to recent consultation with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS).
- 1.5 This document represents an appropriate WSI to deal with *Part A: Full Planning Application for the Development of a new link road between Knowls Lane and Ashbrook Road and associated works* of condition 14 (see Figure 1).
- 1.6 A separate WSI will be prepared for *Part B: Outline Planning Application for the development of up to 265 dwellings, open space and landscaping, with all matters reserved except for access.*
- 1.7 The site has been subject to previous desk-based assessment:
- *Land off Knowls Lane, Oldham, Greater Manchester: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (Orion Heritage, 2017).
- 1.8 The archaeological desk-based assessment has been appended to this WSI to provide background context to the site.

## 2.0 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The principal aim of the archaeological evaluation will be to determine the character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality of any identified archaeological deposits; therefore, ensuring their preservation by record.
- 2.2 This will be undertaken by a programme of archaeological works comprising an archaeological watching brief.
- 2.3 To address the main aim, the general objectives are to:
- Based on the findings from the archaeological desk-based assessment, an archaeological watching brief will be undertaken;
  - Ensure the recording of any archaeological assets discovered during the archaeological watching brief;
  - Ensure that any below ground archaeological deposits exposed are promptly identified;
  - Ensure the recording of all archaeological remains, to place this record in its local context and to make this record available;
  - Undertake a programme of post-investigation assessment;
  - Produce a report and disseminate the results; and
  - Make provision for archive deposition.
- 2.4 This specification conforms to the requirements of current national and local planning policy (including *NPPF* [2019]). It has been designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice, and the appropriate national and local standards and guidelines, including:
- *Management of Recording Projects in the Historic Environment: MORPHE* (English Heritage 2006);
  - *Code of Conduct* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists [CIfA [revised edition] 2014); and
  - *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (CIfA [revised edition] 2014); and
  - *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA [revised edition] 2014).
- 2.5 All aspects of the evaluation will be placed in the public domain by depositing the results with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER).

## 3.0 General Instructions

### Health and Safety

- 3.1 The archaeologist on site will naturally operate with due regard for Health and Safety regulations. This work may require the preparation of a Risk Assessment of the site, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

### Location of Services

- 3.2 The principal contractor will be responsible for locating any drainage pipes, service pipes, cables, etc. which may cross any of the area designated for the watching brief, and for taking the necessary measures to avoid disturbing such services.

### Confirmation and Adherence to Specification

- 3.3 Prior to the commencement of any work, the archaeological contractor must confirm adherence to this specification in writing to GMAAS or state (with reasons) any proposals to vary the specification. Should the contractor wish to vary the specification, then written confirmation of the agreement of GMAAS to any variations is required prior to work commencing. Unauthorised variations are made at the sole risk of the contractor. Modifications presented in the form of a re-written specification/project design will not be considered by GMAAS. Any technical queries arising from the specification detailed below should be addressed to GMAAS without delay.

### Confirmation of Timetable and Contractor's Qualifications

- 3.4 Prior to the commencement of any work, the archaeological contractor must provide GMAAS in writing with:
- A projected timetable for the site work;
  - Details of the staff structure and numbers; and
  - Names and CVs of key project members (e.g. the project manager, site supervisor, any proposed specialists, sub-contractors, etc.).
- 3.5 All project staff provided by the archaeological contractor must be suitably qualified and experienced for their roles. The timetable should be adequate to allow the work to be undertaken to the appropriate professional standard, subject to the ultimate judgement of GMAAS.

### Notification

- 3.6 GMAAS should be provided with as much notice as possible in writing (and certainly not less than one week) of the intention to start work. A copy of the archaeological contractor's risk assessment of the site should accompany the notification.

### Documentary Research

- 3.7 Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, the HER should be visited by either the project manager or the site supervisor, to gain an overview of the archaeological/ historical background of the site and environs. In addition to providing a knowledge base for the work in hand, the results of this assessment may be incorporated into the contractor's report where they are considered to contribute to that report, but any extraneous material should be omitted. The results of this exercise should be used to inform the whole project.

## 4.0 Methodology

### Archaeological Watching Brief

#### Method of Excavation

- 4.1 An archaeological watching brief will be undertaken on the ground works associated with the new link road between Knowls Lane and Ashbrook Road which will fulfil Part A of archaeological condition 14.
- 4.2 An archaeological watching brief will be undertaken during the removal of topsoil and overburden down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits of a maximum 0.2 m. thickness, using an appropriate machine using a wide toothless ditching blade. Any machine work must be carried out under direct archaeological supervision and the machine halted if significant archaeological deposits are encountered. The top of the first significant archaeological horizon may be exposed by the machine but must then be cleaned by hand and inspected for features, and then dug by hand.
- 4.3 All archaeological remains will be hand excavated in an archaeologically controlled and stratigraphic manner sufficient to meet the aims and objectives of the project. The complete stratigraphic sequence, down to naturally occurring deposits will be excavated and the work will investigate and record all inter-relationships between features.
- 4.4 All artefacts are to be retained for processing and analysis except for unstratified 20<sup>th</sup> century material, which may be noted and discarded. Finds will be stored in secure, appropriate conditions following the guidelines in *First Aid for Finds* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

#### Method of Recording

- 4.5 The area subject to the watching brief will be recorded according to the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation. The stratigraphy of each area is to be recorded, even when no archaeological deposits have been identified.
- 4.6 Drawings (at a minimum scale of 1:20) must include heights AOD. Plans (at a minimum scale of 1:50) must include OD spot heights for all principal strata and any features.
- 4.7 The actual areas of excavation and all archaeological (and possibly archaeological) features should be accurately located on a site plan and recorded by photographs, scale drawings and written descriptions sufficient to permit the preparation of a detailed archive and report on the material. The areas, as excavated, will be accurately surveyed, tied into the OS National Grid and located on an up-to-date 1:1250 Ordnance Survey (OS) map base.
- 4.8 Digital photography: as an alternative for colour slide photography, good quality digital photography may be supplied, using cameras with a minimum resolution of 10 megapixels. Digital photography should follow the guidance given by Historic England in *Digital Image Capture and File Storage: Guidelines for Best Practice* (July 2015) and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum's accession policies. Note that conventional black and white print photography is still required and constitutes the permanent record. Digital images will only be acceptable as an alternative to colour slide photography if each image is supplied as both a JPEG and TIFF versions. The latter as an uncompressed 8-bits per channel TIFF version 6 file of not less than 25Mbs (see section 2.3 of the Historic England guidance). The contractor must include metadata embedded in the TIFF file. The metadata must include the following: the commonly used name for the site being photographed, the relevant centred OS grid coordinates for the site to at least six figures, the relevant township name, the date of photograph, the subject of the photograph, the direction of shot and the name of the organisation taking the photograph. Any digital images are to be supplied to GMAAS on archive quality gold CD and ISO19005-1 compliant PDF/A by the archaeological contractor accompanying the hard copy of the report. They will also be archived on the Archaeological Data Service.

#### Use of Metal Detectors

- 4.9 Spoil heaps are to be scanned for non-ferrous metal artefacts using a metal detector capable of making this discrimination, operated by an experienced metal detector user (if necessary, operating under the supervision of the contracting archaeologist). Modern artefacts are to be noted but not retained (-19<sup>th</sup> century material and earlier should be retained).



- 4.10 If a non-professional archaeologist is to be used to carry out the metal-detecting, a formal agreement of their position as a sub-contractor working under direction must be agreed in advance of their use on site. This formal agreement will apply whether they are paid or not. To avoid financial claims under the Treasure Act a suggested wording for this formal agreement with the metal detectorist is: "In the process of working on the archaeological investigation at [location of site] between the dates of [insert dates], [name of person contributing to project] is working under direction or permission of [name of archaeological organisation] and hereby waives all rights to rewards for objects discovered that could otherwise be payable under the Treasure Act 1996."

#### Environmental Sampling Strategy

- 4.11 Bulk samples must be taken from all securely stratified deposits using a strategy which combines systematic and judgement sampling, but which also follows the methodologies outlined in the English Heritage (2011) *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) guidance.
- 4.12 Samples for specialist environmental analysis and scientific dating (soil profiles, archaeomagnetic dating, dendrochronology, etc.) should be taken if suitable material is encountered during the excavation.

#### Conservation Strategy

- 4.13 A conservation strategy must be developed in collaboration with a recognised laboratory. All finds must be assessed to recover information that will contribute to an understanding of their deterioration and hence preservation potential, as well as identifying potential for further investigation. Furthermore, all finds must be stabilised and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the receiving museum. As a guiding principle, only artefacts of a "displayable" quality would warrant full conservation, but metalwork and coinage from stratified contexts would be expected to be x-rayed if necessary, and conservation costs should also be included as a contingency.

#### Human Remains

- 4.14 Any human remains that are discovered must initially be left *in-situ*, covered and protected. GMAAS will be notified at the earliest opportunity. If removal is necessary the remains must be excavated archaeologically in accordance with the *Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England* (English Heritage 2005), a valid Ministry of Justice licence, if appropriate, and any local environmental health regulations.

#### Treasure Act

- 4.15 The terms of the Treasure Act 1996, as amended, must be followed regarding any finds that might fall within its purview. Any finds must be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner as required by the procedures as laid down in the "Code of Practice". Where removal cannot be affected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures must be taken to protect the finds from theft.

#### Unexpectedly Significant or Complex Discoveries

- 4.16 Should there be unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries made that warrant, in the professional judgement of the archaeologist on site, more detailed recording than is appropriate within the terms of this specification, then the archaeological contractor should urgently contact GMAAS with the relevant information to enable them to resolve the matter with the developer.

#### Access/Monitoring Arrangements

- 4.17 GMAAS will be afforded access to the site at any reasonable time. It is usual practice that the visit is arranged in advance, but this is not always feasible. GMAAS will be provided with a site tour and an overview of the site by the senior archaeologist present and should be afforded the opportunity to view all trenches, any finds made that are still on site, and any records not in immediate use. It is anticipated that the records of an exemplar context that has previously been fully recorded will be examined. Any observed deficiencies during the site visit are to be made good to the satisfaction of GMAAS.

## 5.0 Excavation Archives Deposition

- 5.1 Before commencing any fieldwork, the archaeological contractor must contact the relevant district museum archaeological curator to determine the museum's requirements for the deposition of an excavation archive.
- 5.2 Agreement for deposition should be confirmed in writing by the archaeological contractor; this correspondence is to be copied to GMAAS
- 5.3 It is the policy of the relevant museum to accept complete excavation archives, including primary site records and research archives and finds, from all excavations carried out in the district that it serves.
- 5.4 It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to endeavour to obtain consent of the landowner, in writing, to the deposition of finds with the relevant museum.
- 5.5 It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to meet the relevant museum's requirements regarding the preparation of excavation archives for deposition.

## 6.0 Post-Excavation Analysis and Reporting

### Finds and Samples

- 6.1 On completion of the fieldwork, any samples taken shall be processed and any finds shall be cleaned, identified, assessed/analysed, dated (if possible), marked (if appropriate) and properly packed and stored in accordance with the requirements of national guidelines.
- 6.2 Samples should be processed for the recovery of artefactual material, animal/fish/human bones, industrial residues (such as fuel and fuel waste), shell, molluscs, charcoal and mineralised plant remains, as a minimum. 'Specialist' samples (e.g. monoliths, cores, plant/invertebrate macrofossils, etc.) should be processed separately as appropriate.
- 6.3 Material suitable for scientific dating (e.g. charcoal) should be identified to species and assessed for suitability by an environmental specialist prior to submission to a dating laboratory. Any human remains submitted for C14 dating should also have carbon (delta 13C) and nitrogen isotope analysis carried out by the radiocarbon laboratory.
- 6.4 All finds and biological material must be analysed by a qualified and experienced specialist.
- 6.5 Following identification, finds of 20<sup>th</sup> century date should be noted, quantified and summarily described, but can then be discarded if appropriate. All finds which are of 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier date, should be retained and archived.

### Field Archive

- 6.6 A fully indexed field archive shall be compiled, consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographic negatives and a complete set of labelled photographic prints/slides. Standards for archive compilation and transfer should conform to those outlined in *Archaeological Archives – a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Archaeological Archives Forum 2007). The contractor should also take account of any additional requirements imposed by the recipient.
- 6.7 Prints may be executed digitally from scanned versions of the film negatives and may be manipulated to improve print quality (but not in a manner which alters detail or perspective). All digital prints, including those presented in the report, must be made on paper and with inks which are certified against fading or other deterioration for a period of 75 years or more when used in combination. If digital printing is employed, the contractor must supply details of the paper/inks used in writing to GMAAS, with supporting documentation indicating their archival stability/durability. Written confirmation that the materials are acceptable must have been received from GMAAS prior to the commencement of work on site.
- 6.8 The original archive is to accompany the deposition of any finds, providing the landowner agrees to the deposition of finds in a publicly accessible archive. In the absence of this agreement, the field archive (less finds) is to be deposited with the local museum.

### Report Format and Content

- 6.9 It is anticipated that upon (or approaching) completion of fieldwork, a meeting with GMAAS will be arranged by the archaeological contractor, to discuss the results. The developer should also be invited to attend this meeting. The meeting may take the form of a telephone discussion at GMAAS's discretion. Following the meeting, the archaeological contractor will either produce a report to be submitted to GMAAS.
- 6.10 The report should include background information on the need for the project, a description of the methodology employed, and a full description and interpretation of results produced. It is not envisaged that the report is likely to be published, but it should be produced with sufficient care and attention to detail to be of academic use to future researchers.
- 6.11 Location plans should be produced at a scale which enables easy site identification, and which depicts the full extent of the site investigated (a scale of 1:50,000 is not regarded as appropriate unless accompanied by a more detailed plan or plans). Site plans should be at an appropriate scale showing area layout (as dug), features located and, where possible, predicted archaeological deposits.
- 6.12 Artefact analysis is to include the production of a descriptive catalogue, quantification by context and discussion/interpretation if warranted, with finds critical for dating and interpretation illustrated.

- 6.13 Environmental analysis is to include identification of the remains, quantification by context, discussion/interpretation if warranted, and a description of the processing methodology. Radiocarbon results must be presented in full (laboratory sample number, conventional radiocarbon age, delta C13 value and calibration programme). Copies of the laboratory-issued dating certificates must be included as an appendix to the report.
- 6.14 Details of the style and format of the report are to be determined by the archaeological contractor, but should include a full bibliography, a quantified index to the site archive, and as an appendix, a copy of this specification.

#### Summary for Publication

- 6.15 A summary sheet should be completed and submitted to the HER. GMAAS will take digital photographs which may be published on social media feeds as part of an ongoing strategy to enable public access to information about current fieldwork in the county.

#### Publicity

- 6.16 If the project is to be publicised in any way (including media releases, publications, etc.), then it is expected that GMAAS will be given the opportunity to consider whether they wish its collaborative role to be acknowledged, and if so, the form of words used will be at their discretion.

## 7.0 Report Submission and Deposition with the HER

- 7.1 A digital PDF/A copy of the report is to be supplied directly to GMAAS, in a timely manner, and certainly within a period of two months following completion of fieldwork, unless specialist reports are awaited. In the latter case, a revised date should be agreed with GMAAS. The final version of the report will also be uploaded onto OASIS. Any comments made by GMAAS in response to the submission of an unsatisfactory report will be taken into account and will result in the reissue of a suitably edited report to all parties, within a timescale which has been agreed with GMAAS.
- 7.2 The report will be supplied on the understanding that it will be added to the HER where it will be publicly accessible once deposited, unless confidentiality is explicitly requested, in which case it will become publicly accessible six months after deposition.
- 7.3 In terms of copyright, please note that by depositing the report, the contractor gives permission for the material presented within the document to be used by the Council, in perpetuity, although the contractor retains the right to be identified as the author of all project documentation and reports as specified in the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* (chapter IV, section 79). The permission will allow the Council to reproduce material, including for commercial use by third parties, with the copyright owner suitably acknowledged.
- 7.4 The HER supports the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. The overall aim of the OASIS project is to provide an online index to the mass of archaeological grey literature that has been produced because of the advent of large-scale developer funded fieldwork. The archaeological contractor must therefore complete the online OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>. Contractors are advised to contact GMAAS to completing the form. Once a report has become a public document by submission to or incorporation into the HER, the HER may place the information on a website. If appropriate, a note or longer article should also be supplied to the Council for British Archaeology's local Forum publication (please contact the editor or CBA's website for more information).

## 8.0 General Considerations

- 8.1 All works will be in compliance with the *Health and Safety at Work Act* (1974), applicable regulations and codes of practice, and recommendations of the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (SCAUM) *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology* (1986).

### Unauthorised Alterations to Specification by Contractor

- 8.2 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that they have obtained GMAAS's consent in writing to any variation of the specification prior to the commencement of on site work or (if required). Unauthorised variations may result in GMAAS being unable to recommend discharge of the archaeological condition to the Local Planning Officer based on the archaeological information available and are therefore made solely at the risk of the contractor.

### Technical Queries

- 8.3 Similarly, any technical queries arising from the specification detailed above, should be addressed to GMAAS without delay.

### Valid Period of Specification

- 8.4 This specification is valid for a period of one year from date of issue. After that time, it may need to be revised to take into account new discoveries, changes in policy or the introduction of new working practices or techniques.