ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
STAGE 1: DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT:
LAND AT CHESHAM ROAD
BOVINGDON
HERTFORDSHIRE
(Local Allocation 6)
NGR: TL 0087 0360

on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council

Jonathan Hunn BA PhD FSA MI/A

July 2013

ASC: 1605/DHI/LA6

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# Site Data

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## Internal Quality Check

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<td>04 July 2013</td>
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Summary

In April and May 2013 a heritage asset impact assessment was undertaken on land adjacent to Chesham Road, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire. The site is one of six (Local Allocation 6) identified by Dacorum Borough Council as a potential development site. It is the only one, among the six, which may be classified as a brownfield site. Until 1941 it formed part of a typical Chilterns agrarian landscape. Thereafter it underwent a series of developments related to the airfield and then subsequently was put to alternative use.

The potential for the presence of heritage assets during prehistoric and Iron Age periods is assessed to be moderate to high. For the Roman to the start of the modern period, the potential is assessed to be low. There is a moderate to high potential for the presence of World War II assets.

The potential for the survival of heritage assets on the site is assessed as low, except for any World War II assets.

Any prehistoric heritage assets present on site would be likely of at least regional significance. Roman heritage assets would be of at least local, possibly regional significance, while Saxon assets would be of probable regional significance. Heritage assets of later periods, including World War II, may be of local significance.

The likely impact of the development upon any buried heritage assets is assessed to be moderate.

1. Introduction

1.1 In April and May 2013 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) prepared a heritage asset impact assessment (HIA) for land off Chesham Road and Molyneux Avenue, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Dacorum Borough Council, and was carried out according to a method statement prepared by ASC (Fell 2013) and approved by the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HEU), archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), Dacorum Borough Council.

1.2 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-exavcation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a Registered Organisation by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.3 Management

The assessment was managed by David Fell BA MA MIFA, and was carried out under the overall direction of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

1.4 The Site

1.4.1 Location & Description

The assessment site is located in the Borough of Dacorum and the civil parish of Bovingdon, on the western side of the modern extension to the village (NGR
TL 0087 0360). It is irregular in shape and covers 2.6ha. The site is located between the access road to HMP The Mount to its west and the edge of the present day village to its east and north (Fig. 1). The site is presently ‘waste ground’ with occasional piles of rubbish and shrubs and young trees beginning to colonise the area. The remains of an old telephone exchange and settlement pond are located to the south east (Fig. 2).

A detailed description of the site appears in Section 3 of this report.

1.4.2 Topography & Geology
The site is situated on the Chiltern plateau at an altitude of 160m AOD. The terrain is level in the immediate vicinity of the site, but further to the north and south it undulates gently towards the Bulbourne and Chess valleys, respectively. The original soil would have belonged to the Batcombe Association, described as ‘plateau drift and Clay-with-flints’ (Soil Survey 1983, 582a). The solid geology is chalk, usually at a depth of between 5 and 10m (BGS, Sheet 239).

1.4.3 Proposed Development
The site is identified by the local planning authority as suitable for housing development, associated infrastructure and services.
Figure 2: Site location (scale as shown)
2. Aims & Methods

2.1 ‘Desk-based assessment is a programme of study of the historic environment within a specified area or site ... that addresses agreed research and/or conservation objectives. It consists of an analysis of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely heritage assets, their interests and significance and the character of the study area, including appropriate consideration of the settings of heritage assets and, in England, the nature, extent and quality of the known or potential archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interest. Significance is to be judged in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate’ (IFA 2011).

2.2 The assessment was carried out according to the project design and the Institute for Archaeologists’ *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (IFA 2011).

2.3 The following readily available sources of information were consulted for the assessment:

2.3.1 Archaeological Databases
Archaeological databases represent the standard references to the known archaeology of an area. The principal source consulted was the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER). The study area employed in the HER search includes the site itself, and a surrounding area of c.1km radius.

2.3.2 Historic Documents
Documentary research provides an overview of the history of a site and its environs, suggesting the effects of settlement and land-use patterns. The principal source consulted was *Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies* (HALS), Hertford.

2.3.3 Cartographic & Pictorial Documents
Old maps and illustrations are normally a very productive area of research. The principal source consulted was HALS.

2.3.4 Air Photographs
Given favourable light and crop conditions, air photographs can reveal buried features in the form of crop and soil marks. They can also provide an overview of and more specific information about land use at a given time. The principal sources consulted were the HER and the English Heritage Archive (Swindon).

2.3.5 Geotechnical Information
A description of the topography and solid and surface geology of the site and its environs may enable appreciation of the potential condition of any archaeological remains, and determine the potential for the survival of buried waterlogged archaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits.

2.3.6 Secondary & Statutory Sources
The principal sources consulted were HALS and ASC’s reference collection.
2.4 **Walkover Survey**

As part of the assessment a walkover survey of the site was undertaken on 12\textsuperscript{th} April 2013, with the following aims:

- To examine any areas of archaeological potential identified during research for the assessment, in particular with a view to gauging the possible survival or condition of any heritage assets present.

- To consider the significance of any above-ground structures, historic buildings or historic landscape features present.

- To assess the present site use and ground conditions, with a view to the appropriate deployment of fieldwork techniques, if required by the LPA.
3. **Walkover Survey**

3.1 *Extent, Access & Present Use*

The assessment site is covered in secondary vegetation (shrubs, brambles and saplings) with occasional dumps of tipped material (Plates 1-6). There is no clearly defined access point onto the site, though there are roads on or close by on all sides. The boundaries are composed of mainly chestnut paling (linked fencing), wire fences and wooden fencing.

3.2 *Buildings*

No buildings are present on the site.

3.3 *Services*

There are no obvious services present on the site. There is a large storm water pond on the site’s south-east corner.

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Plate 1: General view of the site looking north

Plate 2: General view of the site looking northwest
Plate 3: Looking southwest along the storm water pond

Plate 4: The telephone exchange

Plate 5: Looking southeast along the west boundary of the site
Plate 6: Looking east across the north part of the site

Plate 7: Looking northwest across the west part of the site

Plate 8: Looking northeast from the airfield across the north part of the site
Plate 9: Looking southwest across the centre of the site

Plate 10: The storm water pond from the northwest

Plate 11: General view across the north part of the site
4. Archaeological & Historical Evidence

4.1 The local and regional settings of heritage assets are factors that are taken into consideration when assessing the planning implications of development proposals. The following sections provide a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs.

The study area lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and the site has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods. The following sections provide a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The locations of known heritage assets recorded in the Historic Environment Record (HER) are shown in Fig. 3, and details appear in Appendix 1.

4.2 Archaeological & Historical Background to the Study Area

4.2.1 Prehistoric (before 600BC)
Relatively little is known regarding prehistoric occupation and activity on the Chiltern plateau. To date, most of the evidence for earlier prehistoric occupation (i.e. prior to the Bronze Age) has been recovered from lower-lying ground in the river valleys cutting through the Chilterns. Isolated finds of Neolithic and Bronze Age flints have been recorded between Botley and Ley Hill, approximately 2km south-west of the assessment site (Stainton 1995, fig. 51), but these are typical of discoveries made elsewhere on the Chiltern plateau. Bronze Age activity in the Chilterns is most notably marked by a concentration of barrows and ring ditches along the Chiltern scarp, well to the west and north of the assessment site, but by few other sites or finds elsewhere. It is generally supposed that much of the Chiltern plateau was covered by deciduous woodland from about the 7th millennium BC (ibid. - but see Farley 1995, 28-29), which initially inhibited settlement but was subsequently cleared in a piecemeal way through the later Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and into the Roman period.

4.2.2 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)
The cropmark of a rectilinear enclosure (HER 9202) has been identified on an aerial photograph of Bovingdon Green, c.1km south-east of the assessment site. Its date is unknown, but it could be Iron Age.

4.2.3 Roman (AD43-c.450)
During the Roman period, the Chilterns fell within the tribal territory or civitas of the Catuvellauni, with its capital at Verulamium (Branigan 1987). Once again, most evidence for this period has come from the river valleys cutting through the Chilterns. To the north, the major Roman road Akeman Street followed the Bulbourne valley, and many sites and finds are known along its route, including the villas at Northchurch and Boxmoor (Neal 1976) and the industrial settlement at Cow Roast (Zeepvat 1997). To the south, a number of Roman sites have been identified in the Chess valley, notably the villa at Latimer (Branigan 1971). On higher ground, ‘native’ occupation sites have been recognised in the Ashridge area (Morris & Wainwright 1995), and at Crawleys Lane and Stony Lane during the construction of the A41 Kings
Langley - Berkhamsted bypass (McDonald 1995), but all are some distance (5km and upwards) from the assessment site.

The find of a complete Roman vessel in the churchyard of St Lawrence, Bovingdon, suggests that site may once have been a burial ground (HER 17175). If so, there must have been settlement in the area at one time and its location hints at the possibility of some form of continuity with the present village.

4.2.4 Saxon (c.450-1066)
There is no entry for Bovingdon in the Domesday Survey of 1086, during which time the area lay within the parish of Hemel Hempstead. The present church, which lies approximately 250m southeast of the assessment site, may stand on the site of a Saxon building, as indications of earlier work were noted during mid-19th century restoration works (HER 936).

4.2.5 Medieval (1066-1500)
The name ‘Bovingdon’ first appears c.1200 as Bovyndon. While this has been translated elsewhere (Bovingdon Green, Bucks: Bovington, Dorset) as bufan dune (‘above the down’), it is difficult to see how this can be applied to the Hertfordshire village, which is located in a depression in the Chiltern plateau. It is possible that the first part is a personal name, Boja (Gover et al 1970, 29).

Page (1971, 222) notes that in early times Bovingdon appears to have consisted of woodland and waste and, in 1289-90 when it comprised 10 acres of wood and 254 acres of wasteland, the queen and her tenants of Langley and others had rights of common.

Bovingdon Manor, now Bury Farm, is first mentioned in 1289-90 (HER 763). It lies approximately 460m east of the assessment site, next to the parish church of St Lawrence, which was built in the early 13th century (Pevsner & Cherry 2002, 107; www.bovingdon.org/index.htm), and heavily restored in 1845 by Thomas Talbot Bury (www.imagesofengland.org.uk).

4.2.6 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)
There are four post-medieval sites recorded in the Hertfordshire HER. Possibly the earliest of these is the common land (HER 12527). A chalk pit (HER 7175) is shown on the 1898 Ordnance Survey map in the garden of Bury Farm. A smithy (HER 7177) has been identified from the same source as lying approximately 300m to the southeast, on the High Street. A late 19th century wellhead (HER 5903) lies on the opposite side of the High Street from the former smithy.

A number of 16th-century listed buildings survive on the High Street, including 39, 41, 106 and 108 High Street, and Tumbleweed Cottage. An early 16th-century base-cruck hall-house with cross-wing to the south lies in Church Street. Bury Farm dates from c.1600, The Wheatsheaf and The Bell, which lie on the High Street, are 17th and early 18th century respectively. Whelpley Ash Farm on Chesham Road dates from the 16th century and White Hart Cottage, also on Chesham Road, dates to the 18th century. There are also a number of listed buildings on Chipperfield Road, the southern extension of the High Street (www.imagesofengland.org.uk).
4.2.7 **Modern (1900-present)**

Bovingdon airfield was developed during 1941/2 by John Laing & Son Ltd and was initially home to 7 Group, Bomber Command (HER 13078). It was allocated to the USAAF and from 1943 - 1963 it was known as ‘US Air Station 112’. It served as a major heavy bomber operational training base for B17 crews until the end of the Second World War (Potter 1998). The Ministry of Defence closed the airfield in 1968 and in 1988 The Mount prison was opened.

4.3 **The Known Archaeology & History of the Assessment Site**

4.3.1 **Prehistoric to Medieval (before AD1500)**

No heritage assets are recorded on the assessment site for these periods.

4.3.2 **Post-Medieval (1500-1900)**

Available 18th and 19th-century cartographic evidence demonstrates that the assessment site comprised four, possibly five portions of former enclosed fields. The precise layout is difficult to establish due to the complete obliteration of all the post-medieval boundaries within and adjacent to the site.

4.3.3 **Modern (1900-present)**

Until 1941, when Bovingdon airfield was constructed, the assessment site appears to have remained largely unchanged for several centuries. The impact of the airfield can be seen in an aerial photograph taken in 1948 (6 inch scale: sheet 52/00 SW). There were certainly buildings on the site in 1948 and these appear to have remained in existence to the 1970s. By 1976 all the buildings except the adjacent Telephone Exchange had been swept away. The site then remained much the same until at least 1984. The construction of the prison and its associated access road caused the present area to become isolated and under-used. New housing was subsequently built on its northern edge, and by July 1990 the storm water pond had been constructed at its south-east corner (HCC Aerial Photo no 772; NGR TL 0003/0103).
Figure 3: Heritage assets recorded in the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record.

Figure 4: Extract from Bryant’s map of Hertfordshire, 1825
Figure 5: Extract from the Bovingdon Tithe map, 1838 (not to scale)

Figure 6: Extract from the 1883 Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map (not to scale)
Figure 7: Extract from the 1900 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 sheet (not to scale)

Figure 8: Extract from the 1972 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale sheet (not to scale)
Figure 9: Extract from the 1976 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 sheet (not to scale)

Figure 10: Extract from the 1984 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 sheet (not to scale)
Plate 12: Aerial photograph of Bovingdon Airfield, 1948

Plate 13: Aerial photograph of Bovingdon Airfield and Prison, 1996
5. **Statutory Constraints on Development**

5.1 A range of planning constraints may be in place in the area of the assessment site. These constraints may relate to the area as a whole, and to individual buildings and sites. These constraints are taken into consideration when assessing the implications of planning and other proposals made to the local authority and to other local and national bodies.

5.2 **Conservation Areas**

The assessment site does not lie within or close to a Conservation area.

5.3 **Archaeological Notification Areas**

The assessment site is not within an Archaeological Notification Area.

5.4 **Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

The assessment site is not within or adjacent to a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

5.5 **Listed Buildings**

There are no listed buildings within or adjacent to the assessment site.

5.6 **Heritage & Planning**

The framework for the management of heritage issues in the planning system is currently set out in the Town and Country Planning Act and the National Planning Policy Frameworks (NPPF). Decisions relating to archaeological matters within the area of the site are taken by the local planning authority, acting on the advice of the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit.

The Dacorum Borough Council Local Plan 1991-2011 (April 2004) contains the following heritage-related policies:

- **Archaeology: Policy 118:** Important Archaeological Remains in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011. This policy provides general policy guidance on archaeology and also lists the Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Areas of Archaeological Significance within the borough. Policy 118 is relevant, because it refers to the settings of the defined sites, as well as the sites themselves.
- The Core Strategy will be the principal document in the Council’s Local Planning Framework. A public examination into the draft Core Strategy has taken place and the Council hopes to adopt the plan in autumn 2013
- **Core Strategy Policy CS27:** Quality of the Historic Environment states that: ‘Features of known or potential archaeological interest will be surveyed, recorded and wherever possible retained.’
6. **Assessment of Archaeological Potential**

6.1 **Potential for the Presence of Heritage Assets**

The assessment site is located on the Chiltern plateau, in an area where relatively little is known of prehistoric or Iron Age activity. During the Roman period the site was some distance from the nearest known centres of activity in the Bulbourne and Chess valleys, and was therefore likely to be either in agricultural use, or undeveloped, though there is a possibility that some form of settlement was located in the vicinity of Bovingdon village. In the Saxon period there is no evidence for settlement at Bovingdon, so the assessment site was likely either in agricultural use, or undeveloped. From the medieval period to the 1940s the site appears to have been in continuous agricultural use. In 1941 the site was developed as part of the wartime Bovingdon airfield.

*The potential for the presence of heritage assets during prehistoric and Iron Age periods is assessed to be moderate to high. For the Roman to the start of the modern period, the potential is assessed to be low. There is a moderate to high potential for the presence of World War II assets.*

6.2 **Potential for the Survival of Heritage Assets**

The assessment site appears to have been in agricultural use, from possibly the Roman period to the 1940s. Construction of the World War II airfield, and the more recent creation of a storm water pond on the site, are likely to have had a significant impact on any earlier buried heritage assets. The footings of any World War II buildings may survive on the site.

*The potential for the survival of heritage assets on the site is assessed as low, except for any World War II assets.*

6.3 **Significance of Heritage Assets**

For the earlier (i.e. pre-Iron Age) periods, current knowledge relating to landscapes and their exploitation, to the transition to a farming economy, to settlement patterns and to artefact studies, notably pottery, is slight, and has been highlighted for study in current regional research objectives (e.g. Brown & Murphy in Brown & Glazebrook 2000). Any heritage assets of those periods would be likely of at least regional significance.

During the Roman period, the site lay at some distance from major settlement areas, and was presumably in agricultural use, or undeveloped. Evidence for the nature of, and changes in, landscape use during the period would be of at least local, possibly regional significance.

Little is known of Saxon activity within the study area. The site lies some way from any known settlement, and is therefore likely to have been either in agricultural use or waste land. Any evidence of Saxon activity would therefore be of probable regional significance.

From the medieval period to the 1940s the site has evidently been in agricultural use. Evidence for medieval and post-medieval periods is likely to be of no more than local significance. Surviving World War II assets may be of local significance.
7. **Impact of the Proposed Development**

The proposed development on the assessment site is likely to comprise the construction of approximately sixty new homes, with associated infrastructure and services. No plans or related details are available for consideration at this stage.

As no detailed development proposals have yet been formulated, detailed assessment of the likely impact of the development cannot be made. In general terms, assuming that ‘normal’ methods of construction are employed, probably the greatest impact will be the excavation of strip footings, typically one metre deep, for houses and other buildings. Excavations for buried services will have a similar, though lesser impact. Roads will probably also require excavation to at least subsoil depth. As the site is on a slope, some terracing is also likely.

*The likely impact of the development upon any buried heritage assets is assessed to be moderate.*

8. **Acknowledgements**

The assessment was commissioned by John Chapman of Dacorum Borough Council. Inputs and assistance from Kate Batt, HEU Archaeological Officer, and Isobel Thompson, HEU Historic Environment Officer are gratefully acknowledged. The assistance of the staff of HALS and the English Heritage Archive is also gratefully acknowledged. The Ministry of Justice has sponsored the assessment for Local Allocation LA6.

The project was managed for ASC Ltd by Bob Zeepvat BA MI/A. The research for the assessment was undertaken for ASC by David Fell BA MA MI/A and Jonathan Hunn BA PhD FSA MI/A, who also undertook the walkover survey. The report was prepared by Jonathan Hunn and David Fell, and edited by Bob Zeepvat.
9. References

Standards & Specifications


Fell D 2013  Dacorum Site Allocations Development Plan: Heritage Asset Impact Assessments: Project Design for Desk-Based Archaeological Impact Assessments on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council. ASC doc ref 1605/DHI/1

IFA 2008  Institute for Archaeologists’ Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology.

IFA 2010  Institute for Archaeologists’ Code of Conduct.

IFA (various dates)  Institute for Archaeologists’ Standards & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments 2011, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings 2008).

Secondary Sources

BGS  British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology.


Branigan K 1987  The Catuvellauni.  Alan Sutton (Gloucester).


Gover JEB, Mawer A & Stenton FM 1970  The Place-Names of Hertfordshire.  English Place Name Society 15


Soil Survey 1983  1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend (Harpenden).


Appendix 1: Historic Environment Record Data

Heritage assets listed below are those within the study area, i.e. the site and a surrounding area of 1km radius

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<td>7177</td>
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<td>Site of Smithy, High Street, Bovingdon</td>
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<td>16209</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Findspot</td>
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<td>The Bull, Chipperfield Road, Bovingdon</td>
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<td>Bovingdon Grange, Green vLane, Bovingdon</td>
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Appendix 2: Cartographic Sources

The following maps and plans were consulted in the course of this assessment:

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Appendix 3: Air Photographs

The following photographs were examined in the course of this assessment:

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