RPS Planning, Transport and Environment

INDEX DATA	RPS INFORMATION
Scheme Title M1 Junctions 10-15	Details Archaeological Assessment
Road Number M1	Date January 1996
Contractor Buckinghamshire CC Archaeological Service	
County Buckinghamshire	
OS Reference	
Single sided ✓ Double sided A3 0 Colour 0	

M1 JUNCTIONS 10-15

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT:

ADDITIONAL STAGE 3A (FIELDWALKING) ASSESSMENT AT MOULSOE BUILDINGS FARM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

PREPARED FOR ACER CONSULTANTS AND THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY

REPORT NO 373

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

JANUARY 1996

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M1 WIDENING JUNCTIONS 10-15

Report on additional Stage 3a (fieldwalking) assessment at Moulsoe Buildings Farm

Introduction

Stage 3 archaeological assessment was undertaken at Moulsoe Buildings Farm for Acer Consultants Ltd and the Highways Agency. The assessment was necessitated by a proposed side road realignment associated with the M1 widening. The work consisted of geophysical survey (undertaken by the Bartlett-Clark Consultancy)[1] and fieldwalking (undertaken by Buckinghamshire County Museum Archaeological Service). The work was undertaken as an additional part of a larger programme, and reference should be made to the relevant reports for details of the overall context and methodology[2]. In contrast with the main programme of Stage 3 assessment, undertaken during 1993, the geophysical studies were undertaken prior to the fieldwalking; in this instance, therefore, the fieldwalking results will be discussed in the light of the geophysical survey.

The geophysical survey

The geophysical survey demonstrated the presence of a number of features in the eastern corner of the field, close to the present Newport Road. These consisted of ditches (including possible elements of enclosures) and pits. Although dating of features is difficult, the strength and distribution of the magnetic anomalies was reminiscent of those at Site F, where Stage

[1] ADH Bartlett (Bartlett-Clark Consultancy) *M1 Widening, Junctions 10-15: Geophysical Survey at Site F and near Junction 14*, 1995

[2] Buckinghamshire County Museum Archaeological Service *M1 Widening: Junctions 10-15 Archaeological Assessment Stage 3a*, 1993; ADH Bartlett and AJ Clark *M1 Widening: Junctions 10-15 Archaeological assessment: Stage 3B Geophysical Survey: Section 3*, 1993

4 excavation has shown the anomalies to represent a moderately large site of late Iron-Age/ Romano-British date. Elsewhere in the field, further from the existing Newport Road, the geophysical survey showed traces of field drains or medieval ridge-and-furrow cultivation, buried iron objects and/or scattered debris, and an extant field track. Enhanced magnetic susceptibility was only recorded in that part of the field in which the obviously archaeological anomalies were present.

These results demonstrate the presence of a site of unknown date in the eastern part of the field, which clearly extends beyond the area actually surveyed.

Fieldwalking

Fieldwalking was undertaken during January 1996. Two metre wide transects 20m apart were walked, resulting in a 10% sample, compatible with the strategy adopted elsewhere along the M1 study corridor. It was hoped that finds recovered during the fieldwalking would assist in determining the date of the archaeological features revealed by the magnetometry. Apart from modern debris, however, the only finds recovered from the study area consisted of five pieces of iron slag and seven pieces of struck flint. These did not form any coherent pattern, and there were no concentrations of material. The slag is undatable whilst the struck flints were chronologically undiagnostic, although they are likely to be earlier than the archaeological features detected by the geophysical survey. The flints need represent no more than sporadic and casual "off-site" activity over many centuries, whilst the other finds may be the result of manuring.

Discussion

The geophysical survey demonstrates that the existence of an archaeological site in the eastern part of the field is a virtual certainty. The fieldwalking, on the other hand, did not produce any material which could be shown to be associated with the site. It is therefore

concluded that either (a) the features which comprise the site contained very small concentrations of artefacts, or (b) that vertical displacement of artefacts from the site does not extend into the ploughsoil. In view of the well-defined nature of the magnetic anomalies, which implies that they represent features filled with material derived from relatively extensive human activity, option (a) is unconvincing. It is likely therefore that the absence of finds in the ploughsoil is an indication that the site has been relatively undisturbed by recent agricultural practices, and that it is in a good state of preservation. Trial trenching would be able to confirm this hypothesis.

Site Value Unknown (possibly medium to high?)[3]

Mitigation Measure Stage 4 evaluation to be undertaken, consisting of trial trenching, in order to determine date, character and state of preservation of site. More detailed mitigatory measures to be devised in the light of the stage 4 work.

Significance of Effect Unknown (Moderate adverse?)[4]

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[3] The criteria adopted are those set out in Acer/ Highways Agency *Environmental Statement Vol 2 part 3 (Specialist report on Archaeology), 1994.*

[4] Use of the criteria for measuring adverse effects specified in the *Environmental Statement Vol 3 Part 2* is dependent on the full extent of the site being known. In the case of sites known only from detailed survey within the study corridor, the full extent of sites, and thus the degree of adversity, cannot be adequately determined by these criteria.