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**MORGAN SINDALL PSBP NORTH WEST
BATCH**

Blacon High School Rapid Cultural Heritage Desk-based Assessment

Submitted to:
Morgan Sindall plc
6th Floor
2 Anchorage Quay
Salford Quays
Manchester
M50 3YW

REPORT



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Golder Associates (UK) Ltd (Golder) was contracted by Morgan Sindall plc to prepare a rapid cultural heritage Desk-based Assessment (DBA) to assist in the preparation of a planning application for the proposed redevelopment of Blacon High School (BHS). This cultural heritage report identifies the nature, location and status of known cultural heritage assets which are present within the vicinity of the BHS site and which may be influenced by the proposed redevelopment.

1.1 Site Location and Study Area

The BHS site is located in Blacon, Cheshire at NGR SJ 375 678. The spatial scope of this assessment comprises all the land which may be required for the development (i.e. land situated within the 'red line boundary'), referred to as 'the site', together with a buffer of 500 m around the site, and referred to as the 'Study Area'.

In light of the site's urban context, a Study Area of 500 m was deemed sufficient to provide appropriate context of the baseline cultural heritage conditions.

1.2 Assessment Methodology and Data Sources

A rapid DBA was carried out in order to identify the known cultural heritage assets within the Study Area, to provide context on the cultural heritage potential of the site and the likely impacts of the proposed redevelopment.

Sources of information consulted for this assessment include:

- The National Heritage List (NHL), maintained by English Heritage, for information regarding statutorily designated assets (e.g. Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments);
- The boundaries of local designated Conservation Areas mapped by English Heritage;
- The Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER) for details regarding non-designated assets in Cheshire;
- The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust for details regarding non-designated assets in Clwyd;
- The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) project for details regarding the historic landscape;
- Cadw (Welsh heritage protection authority) for details of Welsh protected wreck sites; and
- Other online, freely available, published materials pertinent to the cultural heritage of the Study Area (e.g. Heritage Gateway, Pastscape, Archaeology Data Service).

For ease of reference, where a cultural heritage asset has been identified within the Study Area, the site has been given a unique ID number. These ID numbers comprise a two letter prefix, denoting site type, followed by a number. A complete list of these assets is presented in the Cultural Heritage Gazetteer in Appendix A. Their positions relative to the site are shown in Drawing BHS-HIST-0001. The HLC information is also provided in the Cultural Heritage Gazetteer, and is shown in Drawing BHS-HIST-0002.

Prefixes used in this report:

- **AR** – Non-designated archaeological remains;
- **HB** – Historic Building; and
- **HL** – Historic Landscape Character unit, as identified by the HLC.



2.0 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

Whilst it is considered a Study Area of 500 m is sufficient to provide adequate context of the baseline cultural heritage conditions around the site, a summary review of the historical and archaeological setting of the wider area is essential. A brief overview from a more synoptic perspective allows for a broader understanding of the baseline data from the outset. As such, this overview presents a summary of the recorded cultural heritage assets, including details of designated sites beyond the Study Area.

The available archaeological and heritage datasets indicate that there are few recorded archaeological sites in the area, with a similar lack of designated assets around the site. Non-designated assets in the area are generally post-Medieval or Modern, with very little earlier material. Wood Farm Pond IV is a former marl pit, one example of many in the region, which is shown on the first edition OS map in 1869. Extracted material would have been used as fertiliser or for building materials. There are two assets that do pre-date this period, one of which, as might be expected considering the proximity to Chester, is possibly Roman. The other asset is a possible Medieval saltersway along Kingswood Lane. There are a number of post-Medieval border stones in the area, demarcating the England-Wales border. To the south of the site are three 1960s tower blocks of social history interest, whilst further south still is the former location of an Isolation Hospital built in 1900 by Henry Beswick to care for patients with infectious diseases. This was subsequently renovated into a care home for the elderly before being completely redeveloped in the 1960s.

The available historic mapping shows the site as undeveloped enclosed fields in 1871 with few changes until the 'Charles Kingley' school building is shown in 1958. Some housing is shown near the site in 1938, and by 1954 there is a small housing estate adjacent to the site, based along two main roads. There are no maps to show the intervening period, during which time the Second World War took place, but the area is recorded as being used as a training camp, with the personnel camp being subsequently converted to housing before being redeveloped. The 1968 1:10,560 OS map of Flintshire labels the area as 'Blacon Camp'.

3.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

3.1 Designated Assets

3.1.1 Scheduled Monuments

English Heritage maintains a schedule of important historic sites and monuments that are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. These are considered to be 'assets of the highest significance', and there is a presumption that 'substantial loss or harm' to such assets or their settings should be 'wholly exceptional' (NPPF Policy 132).

On-site

There are no Scheduled Monuments recorded within the site boundary.

Off-site

There are no Scheduled Monuments recorded within the Study Area. The nearest Scheduled Monument to the site is comprised of the walls, towers, gates and posterns of the City of Chester (NHL No. 1006785). This is located 2.52 km south east of the site boundary.

3.1.2 Listed Buildings

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for compiling a statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and English Heritage provides advice and maintains this list. Grade I and II* Listed Buildings are considered to be 'assets of the highest significance', and there is a presumption that 'substantial loss or harm' to such assets or their settings should be 'wholly exceptional', whilst such damage to a Grade II Listed Building should be 'exceptional' (NPPF Policy 132).

On-site

There are no Listed Buildings recorded within the site boundary.



Off-site

There are no Listed Buildings recorded within the Study Area. The nearest Listed Building to the site is the Grade II Poplars Farmhouse (NHL No. 1130582), located 1.24 km to the north. To the west is a Grade II Listed Building, designated and protected by Cadw, comprising the former Women's Land Army Hostel (Cadw Record ID 87601), at a distance of 1.39 km from the site.

3.1.3 Registered Parks and Gardens

English Heritage is enabled by Section 8C of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 (inserted by Section 33 of, and Paragraph 10 of Section 4, to the National Heritage Act 1983) to compile the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England*. Although the Register is non-statutory, Registration is a material consideration in planning terms (*Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, 2, 24 September 1994*) and local authorities are required to take the historical importance of sites into consideration when considering planning applications.

Grade I and II* Parks and Gardens are considered to be 'assets of the highest significance', and there is a presumption that 'substantial loss or harm' to such assets or their settings should be 'wholly exceptional', whilst such damage to a Grade II Park or Garden should be 'exceptional' (NPPF Policy 132).

On-site

There are no Registered Parks and Gardens recorded within the site boundary.

Off-site

There are no Registered Parks and Gardens recorded within the Study Area. Overleigh Road Cemetery (NHL No. 1001607) is the nearest Registered Park and Garden to the site. It is Grade II and situated 3.31 km south east of the site.

3.1.4 Conservation Areas

Local authorities have the power to designate as a Conservation Area any area of 'special architectural or historic interest' that is seen as worth protecting or enhancing. Local authorities have extra powers in such areas as regards demolition, minor developments, and the protection of trees.

On-site

There are no Conservation Areas recorded within the site boundary.

Off-site

There are no Conservation Areas recorded within the Study Area. The nearest Conservation Area to the site is the Chester City Centre Conservation Area, located 2.28 km south east of the site boundary. Also in close proximity is the Liverpool Road Conservation Area, located 2.3 km south east of the site boundary.

3.1.5 World Heritage Sites

The Convention Concerning the World Cultural Heritage (1972), ratified by the UK Government, provides the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) with the power to inscribe sites of international importance as World Heritage Sites. Local authorities and stakeholders are encouraged to protect these sites through the production of Management Plans, which aim to manage the sites in a sustainable fashion.

World Heritage Sites are considered to be 'assets of the highest significance', and there is a presumption that 'substantial loss or harm' to such assets or their settings should be 'wholly exceptional' (NPPF Policy 132).

On-site

There are no World Heritage Sites recorded within the site boundary.



Off-site

There are no World Heritage Sites recorded within the Study Area. The Liverpool - Maritime Mercantile City designation (NHL No. 1000104) is the nearest, covering the city's riverfront and docklands area. It is 21.1 km north of the site boundary.

3.1.6 Registered Battlefields

Since 1995, English Heritage has compiled the *Register of Historic Battlefields*. Local authorities are required to take the historic importance of these sites into consideration when considering planning applications and the inclusion of a battlefield on the Register will serve to highlight a site's potential.

Registered Battlefields are considered to be 'assets of the highest significance', and there is a presumption that 'substantial loss or harm' to such assets or their settings should be 'wholly exceptional' (NPPF Policy 132).

On-site

There are no Registered Battlefields recorded within the site boundary.

Off-site

There are no Registered Battlefields recorded within the Study Area. The nearest is the location of the 1645 Battle of Rowton Heath (NHL No. 1000031) in Cheshire, located 8.6 km south east of the site boundary.

3.1.7 Protected Wrecks

The Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) allowed the Government to apply a statutory designation to a number of wreck sites. Designated sites are identified as being likely to contain the remains of a vessel, or its contents, which are of historical, artistic or archaeological importance.

On-site

There are no Protected Wrecks recorded within the site boundary.

Off-site

There are no Protected Wrecks recorded within the Study Area. The nearest is the Resurgam Submarine wreck on the Denbighshire coast. The wreck is the world's earliest extant powered submarine built in 1879, and is located 46.6 km north west of the site boundary.

3.2 Non-Designated Assets

3.2.1 Archaeological Remains

On-site

There is one non-designated site recorded within the site boundary that may contain archaeological remains. Site **AR-1** is the former location of a Second World War Personnel Camp, established on the golf course at Blacon after it was commandeered by the Ministry of Defence in 1939. The camp was associated with the 26th Machine Gun Training Centre and housed both men and officers in temporary structures. Military houses were built until the 1950s but, following the closure of the camp in 1960, the area was significantly redeveloped. The current school occupies the former parade ground.

Off-site

There are five non-designated sites (**AR-2** to **AR-6**) recorded within the Study Area that may contain archaeological remains. The details of these sites are provided in Table 1.



Table 1: Non-designated Archaeological Sites within Study Area

| ID | Site name | Site type | Period | Distance and relationship to site |
|------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AR-2 | Railway cutting at Blacon | Monument | early 20 th century | 400 m north |
| AR-3 | Chester to Connah's Quay line (GCR) | Monument | late 19 th century | 379 m north (runs east to west, to north of site) |
| AR-4 | Blacon Point Roman military camp | Monument | Roman | 204 m south |
| AR-5 | Blacon Point (Second World War) Training Camp | Monument | Modern (WWII) | 403 m south |
| AR-6 | Lower King's Ferry Turnpike Trust | Monument | 19 th century | 304 m south west (runs north west-south east and then east, to south of site) |

3.2.2 Historic Buildings

On-site

There are no Historic Buildings (e.g. non-designated, historically significant, locally listed structures) recorded within the site boundary.

Off-site

There is one Historic Building recorded within the Study Area. The Mathew Henry Chapel, **HB-1**, was constructed in 1965 and is located 162 m south of the site boundary.

3.2.3 Historic Landscape

The Cheshire HLC identifies six HLC units within the Study Area, comprising five broad groups. The site is contained entirely within one HLC unit, **HL-1**. The details of these HLC units are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Historic Landscape of site and Study Area

| ID | Broad group | Land use | Relationship to site |
|------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| HL-1 | settlement | 20 th century settlement | on-site |
| HL-2 | communications | post-Medieval communications | off-site |
| HL-3 | ancient fieldscapes | Medieval townfields | off-site |
| HL-4 | settlement | 20 th century settlement | off-site |
| HL-5 | woodland | post-Medieval plantation | off-site |
| HL-6 | post-Medieval fieldscapes | post-Medieval field systems | off-site |



4.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 Summary and Potential Impacts

There is one non-designated archaeological asset, **AR-1**, recorded within the site boundary. The site was used as a military personnel camp, built during the Second World War to accommodate those men using the nearby training camp (**AR-5**). The potential for undiscovered archaeological remains related to **AR-1**, if present, to survive at the site is considered to be low. This is because, according to the Cheshire HER, the current school grounds are located on the former parade ground of the camp, which would have remained undeveloped. It is considered, therefore, that the proposed redevelopment will have a negligible impact upon **AR-1**. There is the potential, albeit limited, for undiscovered archaeological remains that pre-dated the construction of the training camp to have survived as sub-surface remains. As the proposed redevelopment would involve below ground disturbance via earthworks, the potential for these to impact upon such remains, if present, is a material consideration.

A possible Roman military camp (**AR-4**), identified from RAF aerial photography in the 1980s, is documented in the HER 200 m south of the site. **AR-4** was subsequently rejected as a Roman camp in 1994 by the RCHME Roman Camps in England Project, however this is not commented upon in the HER entry. Whilst the potential for undiscovered on-site Roman archaeological remains to exist may be considered to be lower in the context of this rejection, the unidentified rectangular enclosure thought to represent an archaeological site may still be significant. The potential for any undiscovered on-site archaeological remains associated with the other non-designated archaeological sites (**AR-2**, **-3** and **-6**) is considered to be low.

There is one non-designated Historic Building (**HB-1**) in the Study Area to the south of the site. It is considered that the proposed redevelopment would have a negligible impact upon the setting of this asset.

In conclusion, it is considered that there is potential for the proposed redevelopment to adversely impact the cultural heritage of the site if sub-surface archaeological remains survive relating to **AR-4**, if the rectangular feature is positively identified as being archaeological in origin.

4.2 Proposed Further Work

It is recommended that further archaeological work is carried out prior to redevelopment commencing to assess the likelihood of archaeological remains surviving on-site. Further desk-based work is recommended comprising the study of the existing aerial photographic archive, reporting the results and preparing a rectified map. In addition, a detailed investigative study into the layout and design of the Second World War military camp is proposed. Following the conclusions of this work, it is recommended that consultation with the County Archaeologist is undertaken to determine whether any evaluation works are required on-site prior to construction (e.g. targeted geophysical survey, trial trenching) and/or the need for a watching brief during earthworks.



Report Signature Page

GOLDER ASSOCIATES (UK) LTD

Handwritten signature of Angus Marrison in black ink.

Angus Marrison
Project Manager

Handwritten signature of Paul Wheelhouse in black ink.

Paul Wheelhouse
Associate/Cultural Heritage Consultant

Date: 10 October 2014

AM/PW/pr

Company Registered in England No.1125149.

At Attenborough House, Browns Lane Business Park, Stanton-on-the-Wolds, Nottinghamshire NG12 5BL

VAT No. 209 0084 92

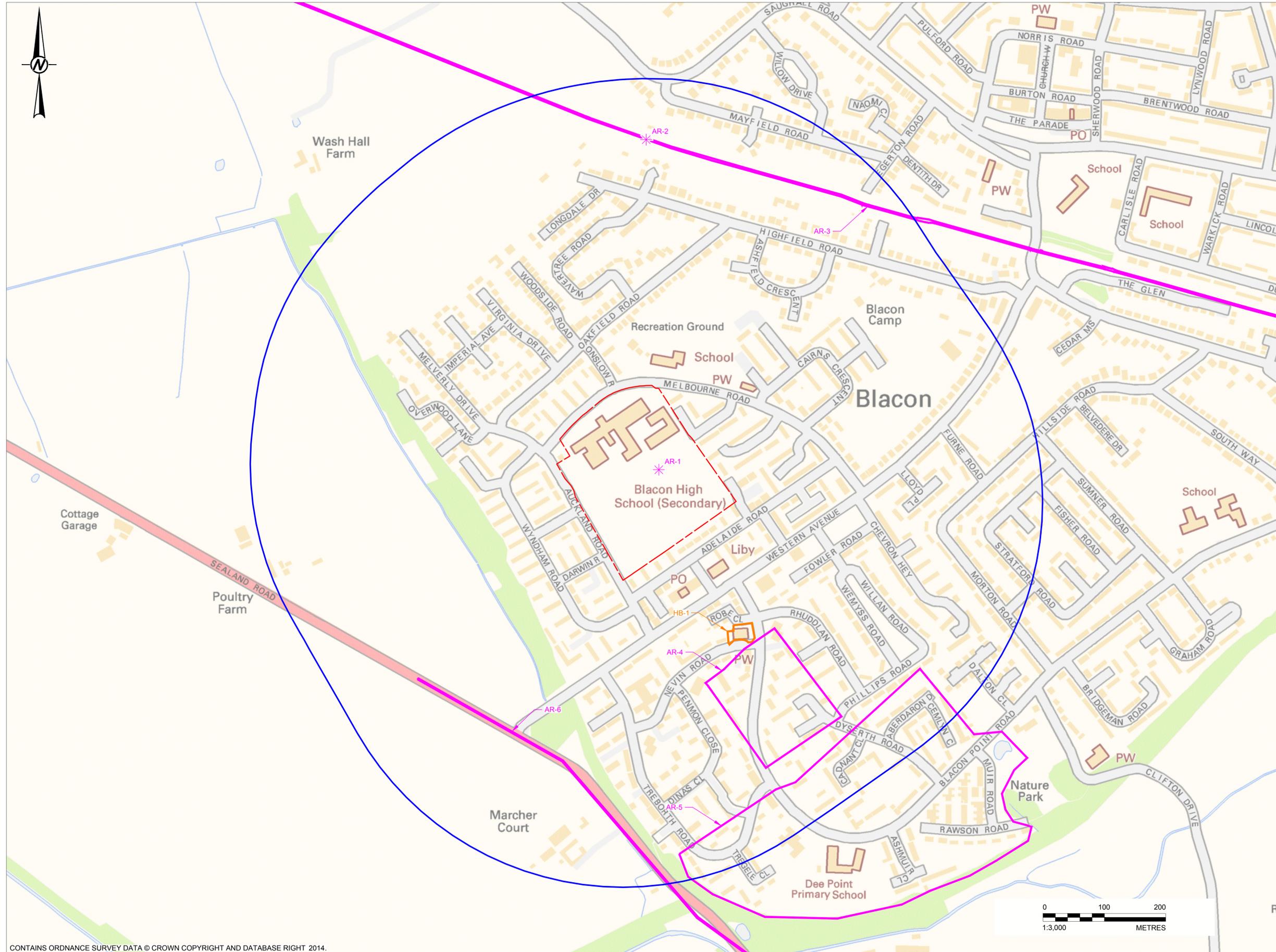
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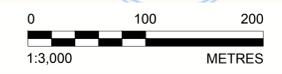
DRAWINGS

Drawing 1 – Study Area

Drawing 2 – Historic Landscape Characterisation



- LEGEND**
-  School Boundary
 -  500 m Study Area
 -  Archaeological Remains
 -  Historic Buildings



MORGAN SINDALL **MORGAN SINDALL**
INVESTMENTS

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Blacon High School | | A1 |
| DRAWING TITLE | | |
| Cultural Heritage Assets within BHS Study Area | | |
| SCALE | DATE | DRAWN BY |
| As indicated | 11.09.14 | TJ |
| PROJECT NUMBER | DRAWING NUMBER | REVISION |
| 13514520653 | BHS-HIST-0001 | 1 |



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- LEGEND**
- School Boundary
 - 500 m Study Area
 - Historic Landscape - HL-1
 - Historic Landscape - HL-2
 - Historic Landscape - HL-3
 - Historic Landscape - HL-4
 - Historic Landscape - HL-5
 - Historic Landscape - HL-6

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MORGAN SINDALL INVESTMENTS

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|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Blaicon High School | |
| DRAWING TITLE | A1 |
| Historic Landscape Characterisation | |
| SCALE | DATE |
| As indicated | 11.09.14 |
| DRAWN BY | CHECKED BY |
| TJ | CR |
| PROJECT NUMBER | DRAWING NUMBER |
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| 1 | |

HLM

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APPENDIX A

Gazetteer



APPENDIX A Gazetteer

Table 1: Cultural Heritage Gazetteer (Archaeological Sites)

| ID | HER ID | Record Type | Site Name | Description | Period | Easting | Northing |
|------|----------|-------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|----------|
| AR-1 | MCH20902 | MON | Blacon Point (Second World War) Personnel Camp | Military building, army camp | Modern (WWII) | 33762 | 36774 |
| AR-2 | MCH20894 | MON | Railway cutting at Blacon | Railway cutting, railway | early 20th century | 33760 | 36828 |
| AR-3 | MCH19854 | MON | Chester to Connah's Quay line (GCR) | Railway | late 19th century | 33852 | 36784 |
| AR-4 | MCH9115 | MON | Blacon Point Roman military camp | Fort, military camp | Roman | 33781 | 36737 |
| AR-5 | MCH10604 | MON | Blacon Point (Second World War) Training Camp | Bombing range, training camp, practice trench, rifle range | Modern (WWII) | 33794 | 36722 |
| AR-6 | MCH20427 | MON | Lower King's Ferry Turnpike Trust | Toll road | 19th century | 33853 | 36697 |

Table 2: Cultural Heritage Gazetteer (Historic Buildings)

| ID | Building Name | Period | Easting | Northing |
|------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|----------|
| HB-1 | Mathew Henry Chapel (Blacon point) | 20 th century (1965) | 33775 | 36748 |

Table 3: Cultural Heritage Gazetteer (Historic Landscape Characterisation)

| ID | Broad Group | Land Use |
|------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| HL-1 | settlement | 20th century settlement |
| HL-2 | communications | post-Medieval communications |
| HL-3 | ancient fieldscapes | Medieval townfields |
| HL-4 | settlement | 20th century settlement |
| HL-5 | woodland | post-Medieval plantation |
| HL-6 | post-Medieval fieldscapes | post-Medieval field systems |

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|---------------|-------------------|
| Africa | + 27 11 254 4800 |
| Asia | + 86 21 6258 5522 |
| Australasia | + 61 3 8862 3500 |
| Europe | + 44 1628 851851 |
| North America | + 1 800 275 3281 |
| South America | + 56 2 2616 2000 |

solutions@golder.com
www.golder.com

Golder Associates (UK) Ltd
Golder House
Tadcaster Enterprise Park
Station Road
Tadcaster
North Yorkshire
LS24 9JF
UK
T: [+44] (0) 1937 837800

