

**Land at Huish Episcopi,
Somerset**

**Initial Site Heritage
Appraisal**

Client: THE DIOCESE OF BATH AND
WELLS

AB Heritage Project No:60644

Date:01/04/2019

Land at Huish Episcopi, Somerset Initial Site Heritage Appraisal

Client The Diocese of Bath and Wells
Project Number 60644
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 AB Heritage Limited (herein after AB Heritage) has been commissioned by Greenslade Taylor Hunt (GTH) on behalf of their clients the Diocese of Bath and Wells to undertake an Initial Site Heritage Assessment for land at Huish Episcopi, Somerset.
- 1.1.2 The client is considering the feasibility of a mixed development comprising residential and employment units and have requested this assessment to identify any potential heritage risks.
- 1.1.3 This document presents an early understanding of known cultural heritage receptors within and around the site, to gain an understanding of potential constraints associated with future development.
- 1.1.4 The Initial Site Heritage Assessment consists of the following work elements:
- Assessment of information from online resources including: Heritage Gateway; Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC); Somerset Historic Environment Record (SHER); and the Archaeology Data Service;
 - Site location visit to enable a rapid appraisal of any likely effects;
 - Compilation of this report.
- 1.1.5 Where known or potential assets are identified this report sets out suitable potential recommendations for progressing development in relation to heritage, if appropriate.
- 1.1.6 This report is not for planning purposes, does not constitute a Desk Based Assessment, and is designed solely to guide the initial works and decision-making process of the design team.

1.2 Site Location & Description

- 1.2.1 The site is located at Huish Episcopi, Somerset, TA10 9HQ, centred approximately on National Grid Reference ST 42778 26510.
- 1.2.2 The proposed development site comprises an area of approximately c.2.6 hectares, currently utilized as agricultural land.
- 1.2.3 The site is enclosed by the Tanyard Lane at the south-west site boundary; the road to Muchelny at its west boundary; the grounds of the vicarage, a car park and the A372 along its northern boundary; and the Courtfield estate and fields forming its east and south-east boundaries.

1.3 Proposed Development

- 1.3.1 At this stage, the client is considering the feasibility of undertaking a mixed residential and commercial development. Due to this, no proposal plans were available at the time of writing (February 2019).

2. BASELINE CONDITIONS

2.1 Constraints Checklist

2.1.1 The following is a high-level list of known heritage constraints within and in 250m of the proposed site of development.

Table 1: Heritage Constraints Checklist

Statutory Designations		YES	NO
Scheduled Monuments	Within Site		X
	Within 250m of Site		X
Listed Buildings	Within Site		X
	Within 250m of Site	8	
Conservation Areas	Site Within Conservation Area	X	
	Within 250m of <u>Additional</u> Conservation Area		X
World Heritage Sites	Site Within World Heritage Site		X
	Site Within World Heritage Site Management Plan Area (Sphere of Influence)		X
Non-Statutory Designations		YES	NO
Register of Parks & Gardens / Historic Landscapes	Site Within Registered Park and Garden of Historic Interest		X
	Within 250m Registered Park and Garden of Historic Interest		X
Battlefields Trust UK Fields of Conflict database	Site Within Battlefield		X
	Within 250m of Battlefield		X
Historic Environment Record		YES	NO
Somerset Historic Environment Record - Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record (SHER)	Within Site	3	
	Within 250m of Site	14	

2.2 Overview Archaeology & Historical Background

Within the site boundary

2.2.1 Within the proposed site boundary there are currently three recorded archaeological entries on the Somerset HER (Table 1), which relate to:

- An archaeological watching brief conducted during Huish water main works, located fully within the site [SHER: 30229];
- An archaeological watching brief for the Curry Mead to Bineham water pipeline which encountered Prehistoric to Medieval remains [SHER: 15120]; and
- An archaeological watching brief for the Somerset Spine Main Phase II (Huish Drove to Batts Lane) which encountered archaeological remains from the Bronze Age to the Post-Medieval period [SHER: 30726].

2.2.2 No report is currently available for the watching brief conducted wholly within the site, and no details are available online [SHER: 30229].

2.2.3 Available details for the other two watching briefs, which both traversed part of the site, suggests that the archaeological remains they encountered were located to the south-east & south-west of the site [SHER: 15120 & 30726, respectively]. For the Somerset Spine works these appear to be located in proximity to Huish Drove, a road which runs west from c. 30m south-west of site.

2.2.4 The west half of site is also located within the Langport & Huish Episcopi Conservation Area. The Conservation Area covers much of Langport and the south-west part of Huish Episcopi. The site is located within the Hanging Chapel to Huish Church and environs character area. Conservation areas are defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Within the Study Area

2.2.5 Additionally, there are a range of features within the 250m study area, and an overview of these is provided for context.

2.2.6 Archaeological watching briefs during water mains works within the study area have encountered remains dating from the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval periods as described above [SHER: 15120 & 30726].

2.2.7 The Grade I Listed Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary [SHER: 51810], located c. 40m north-west of site has 12th century origins. Further Medieval evidence comes from the existence from 1302 of a water mill c. 140m north-east of the site [SHER: 54044]; and the recovery of a quantity of Medieval pottery c. 250m north-west of site [SHER: 54818].

2.2.8 Archaeological evidence of unknown date is present in the form of a pair of burials discovered c. 90m south of site [SHER: 16409] (assumed at the time to derive from the Civil War battle of Langport, which took place east of Huish Episcopi); additionally, there are a series of earthworks of unclear form and date in the field around the north of the church and graveyard [SHER: 55321].

2.2.9 A group of four Grade II Listed buildings attest to the Late and Post-Medieval settlement of the area, comprising:

- Pound Farmhouse, c. 17th century, located c. 10m from the south-west corner of site [SHER: 16712];

- Pound Cottage, 18th century or earlier, abutting the southern edge of site [SHER: 51814];
- The Rose and Crown Inn, c. 1800, located c. 210m north-east of site [SHER: 51819]; and
- Huish Farmhouse, possibly early 19th century, located c. 40m from the north-west corner of site [SHER: 51813].

2.2.10 The road to Muchelny forming the western boundary of site was an 18th century turnpike road from Huish Episcopi to Davids Lane, Seavington St Michael [SHER: 26158]; additionally, a tannery was in existence c. 210m south of site as depicted on maps from 1887, on the site of the modern abattoir [SHER: 54056].

2.2.11 Late 19th century mapping shows an apparent small structure at the west edge of the site on the first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map (1887), potentially within its own plot (loosely matching the western plot of the proposed site). The rest of the western half of the site appears to consist of orchards or landscaped grounds. The main plot forming the eastern half of site appears to be a field with a pond at its southern end. All these features are still visible on the 1930 OS map, with only partial thinning of the depicted trees in places.

2.2.12 Historic mapping shows the wider area to consist of small-scale occupation focused along roads, which modern routes can be seen to adhere to. This is amongst a wider landscaped occupied by broad swathes of farmland.

2.2.13 There are a further 3 Listed structures within a 250m radius from the site boundary in addition to those listed above. These consist of:

- The Grade II Listed Huish Episcopi War Memorial (abutting the north edge of the site) [SHER: 17829]; and
- The Grade II Listed Millard and Gould monuments, c. 17th & 18th century respectively, located in the churchyard, starting c. 20m north-west of site [SHER: 51811 & 51812].

2.2.14 A non-designated asset, the former Church Room is Victorian in date and located c. 10m north of the site, on the corner of the A372 [SHER: 30324]. The vicarage, a relatively large and mostly enclosed property, whilst not a recognised heritage asset, also has links to the church and forms the north-western site boundary.

2.3 Past Impacts within the Site Boundary

2.3.1 Full site access was not attempted after consultation with Clare Alers-Hankey and Laura Polley of GTH, in order to avoid generating any local concern at this early stage.

2.3.2 The following table provides a snapshot of perceived past impacts on the site that may have affected the survival of archaeology and/or heritage, based on views into the site from the surrounding area, as well as current and historic mapping:

Table 2: Past Impacts within the Site Boundary

Current Land Use	YES	NO
Agriculture	X	
Residential Development		X
Industrial / Utilities		X
Recreation / Amenity		X
Other		X
Evidence for Historic Land Use on Historic OS Maps (OS Map of 1888 - 1:2,500)	YES	NO
Agriculture	X	
Residential development		X
Industrial / Utilities		X
Recreation / Amenity		X
Other	X	

2.3.3 The level of modern and/or past impact potentially affecting the archaeological risk rating is believed to be Low-Medium i.e. May be expected to occur (in line with Table 4), associated with plough and / or tree root damage. The 'Other' on historic mapping refers to the structure at the west edge of site.

2.4 Consultation

2.4.1 There has been no consultation with the Local Planning Authority during the preparation of this document.

2.5 High Level Site Visit

2.5.1 A visit of the site was conducted on Monday 18th February 2019. The purpose of this visit was to gain a greater understanding of the character of the site and surrounding area. Several accompanying photos are included.

2.5.2 The topography of Huish Episcopi, including the site, sees the land sloping gently down from north to the south, with the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary roughly marking the top of this rise.

2.5.3 No attempt to access the site was attempted during this visit after discussion with GTH (see Para 2.3.1). Views from the around the site, such as the car-park beside the vicarage, suggested the use of the site largely for pasture (Photos 1 & 2).



Photo 1. Western half of site, view from north

- 2.5.4 Relatively mature looking field boundaries appear consistent with those visible on historic mapping. These restrict visibility across the plots (Photo 2).
- 2.5.5 Much of the southern boundary of the site is marked by a stone wall, which runs west from Pounds Farmhouse to the south-west corner of site (Photo 3).
- 2.5.6 There was no evidence of the structure depicted on historic mapping at the south-west corner of site (Photo 2). However, the discrete nature of the site visit precluded a detailed examination for earthworks or past impacts within the site boundary.



Photo 2. South-west corner of site



Photo 3. View north from Tanyard Lane

- 2.5.7 In the wider area the topography and development around Huish Episcopi combine to reduce views to and from the site.
- 2.5.8 To the south, there are very limited views from the road to Muchelny back towards to the church, which disappear once the abattoir is reached / passed (heading south). To the east, residential properties along the southern edge of the A372, including the Courtfield estate at the north-east of site, remove nearly all views from the road towards the site.
- 2.5.9 Heading north, the A372 provides only limited views of the north-east corner of site, reducing rapidly with distance due to the sloping nature of the topography and the position of intervening structures the former church room and the WWI monument. However, there are views to the site from the church due to the car park present at the north edge of site, albeit with an intervening line of relatively immature planting (Photo 4).



Photo 4: View of site from church

2.5.10 To the west of site, a combination of a drop in ground level, sloping down to Langport to the west, combined with the boundary wall and gardens of the vicarage, means there are no views into the site, beyond those from the south-west corner (Photos 2 & 5).



Photo 5: Looking to site from the north-west

3. CULTURAL HERITAGE ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Cultural Heritage Risk Summary

Archaeology

- 3.1.1 There is evidence of activity from the Bronze Age to the Post-Medieval period within the 250m study area, particularly from work associated with the Somerset Spine Main Phase II [SHER: 30726].
- 3.1.2 Three watching briefs have taken place within or traversing the site; however, the exact details of any remains encountered within the site are not currently available online (see Paragraphs 2.2.2 – 2.2.3) [SHER: 15120, 30229 & 30726].
- 3.1.3 The evidence from the rest of the study area suggests Huish Episcopi is a settlement with Medieval roots, likely to be focused on the Grade I Listed 12th century Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary [SHER: 51810]. The location of current and former historic structures, such as the former mill [SHER: 54044], combined with historic mapping evidence, suggests that the main focus for settlement was along routeways. Many of these are likely to be relatively historic, such as the former turnpike road to Muchelny [SHER: 26158]. The wider picture appears to be of a rural, farming landscape.
- 3.1.4 There is considered to be a Low / Medium probability for remains dating from the Bronze Age to Post- Medieval period, in line with Table 4, based on previous archaeological work within the study area, (including the Somerset Spine Main Phase II works to the south-west of site), as well as the evidence of occupation from the Medieval period such as the Medieval church and mill c. 40m north-west and c. 140m north-east of to the site, respectively.
- 3.1.5 Therefore, there is considered to be a Medium Cultural Heritage Risk rating, i.e. 'Unlikely to affect asset value, may constrain design options, may affect project cost and programme', in line with Table 4.

Built Heritage

- 3.1.6 There is no built heritage within the proposed development site boundary; however, there are eight Listed buildings within the 250m study area. This includes the Grade I Listed Building Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary c. 40m north-west of the site [SHER: 51810]. The western half of the site is also located within the Langport and Huish Episcopi Conservation Area.
- 3.1.7 There is also a single non-designated asset, the former Church Room c. 10m north of the site [SHER: 30324].
- 3.1.8 The probability of an impact on these assets, considering their proximity and especially the likely importance of the Conservation Area as well as the Grade I Listed church, is considered to be High in line with Table 4, due to the likely changes to their setting which would have the potential to affect the value of these assets.
- 3.1.9 The Cultural Heritage Risk is considered to be Low for built heritage in line with Table 4, i.e. 'Unlikely to affect asset value, design, project cost or programme', as long as these assets and their settings are considered fully during the development of the development design.

Table 3: Cultural Heritage Risk Summary

Risk Rating (see Table 4)	High	High - Medium	Medium	Medium - Low	Low	Uncertain
Archaeological Probability ¹				X		
Archaeological Risk ²			X			
Built Heritage Probability ¹	X					
Built Heritage Risk ²				X		

Table 4: Cultural Heritage Risk Summary Key

¹ Probability		² Risk	
High:	Known or almost certain to occur	High:	Potential to affect asset value/constrain design and have significant implications for cost and programme
Medium:	May be expected to occur	Medium:	Unlikely to affect asset value, may constrain design options. May affect project cost and programme
Low:	Unlikely to occur during the lifetime of the project	Low:	Unlikely to affect asset value, design, project cost or programme
Uncertain:	Insufficient Information to Assess	Uncertain:	Insufficient Information to Assess

3.2 Issues to Consider During Future Design / Development Works

- 3.2.1 Where below-ground archaeology does survive there is a potential that future groundworks may result in some form of impact, partially or completely removing such features where there is a direct impact.
- 3.2.2 The need for more detailed assessment works should be considered during the design stage to assess the potential below-ground archaeological risk. This could take the form of a dedicated Archaeology Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) to establish the potential for archaeological deposits to survive, particularly in light of the multiple watching briefs which have been conducted in and around the site.
- 3.2.3 There is likely to be some form of setting impact on surrounding designated heritage assets depending on the form, scale and extent of future development works.
- 3.2.4 Consideration should be made of the setting of the Grade I Listed Building the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary [SHER: 51810], as well as the Grade II Listed assets Pound Farmhouse, Pound Cottage and Huish Episcopi War Memorial, located within c. 10m / directly adjacent to the proposed site, respectively [SHER: 16712; 51814 & 17829].
- 3.2.5 The presence of part of the site within the Langport & Huish Episcopi Conservation Area will also need to be reflected in any design proposals.

3.2.6 The design team should be provided with this constraint report to guide future design works.

3.3 Outline Recommendations

3.3.1 Based on the above information it is proposed that a detailed Combined Archaeology Desk-Based Assessment and Heritage Statement be produced. This would comprise:

- Preparation of a detailed gazetteer of cultural heritage receptors for both the site and an area 500m around the project application boundary, in which the known and potential cultural heritage resource will be fully established;
- A review of documentary sources and historic data held by Somerset Archives and Local Studies at Somerset Heritage Centre covering the proposed development site, as well as examination of relevant information held by the Historic Environment Record;
- An assessment of aerial photographs held by the National Monuments Record Centre in Swindon, where these exist (due to the open nature of the ground);
- A site and area walkover, which will assess the potential for above or below ground archaeological remains within the site, and identify potential visual impacts from designated cultural heritage receptors identified within the study area;
- An assessment of any built heritage assets in order to understand their significance and the importance of setting to their heritage value; and
- Consultation with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) Archaeological Advisor and Conservation Officer to discuss any potential issues in relation to known and potential buried archaeological remains and designated assets that might be affected by the proposed development.

3.3.2 This document could be used to guide emerging designs with further consultation. During the final design stages, these could be assessed against the Statement of Significance to produce a full Heritage Statement, considering the predicted heritage impacts of the development, to accompany a formal planning application.

4. SOURCES

4.1 Sources Checklist

Checklist		YES	NO
Information Supplied by Client			X
Ordnance Survey Information	Modern Ordnance Survey	X	
	1887 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey	X	
Somerset Historic Environment Record (SHER)		X	
Multi-government Agency Mapping (MAGIC)		X	
Public Libraries	Local		X
	National		X
Consultation with Local Planning Authority Archaeologist			X

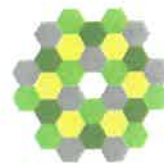
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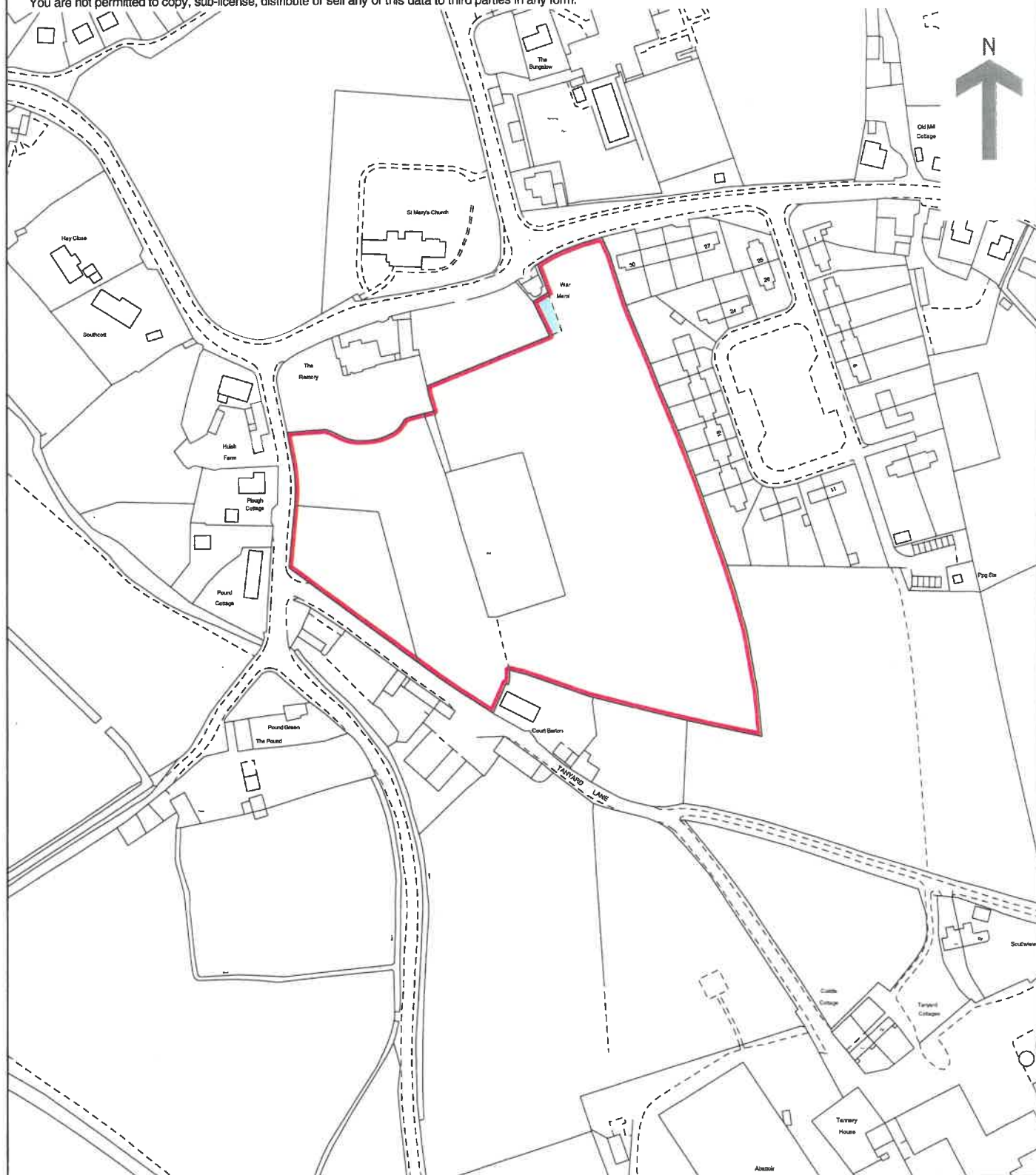
Land Registry

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Administrative area **Somerset: South Somerset**



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