

# **White Hart Hotel, 22 High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames**

## **Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation**

### **1. SUMMARY OF BRIEF:**

- 1.1 This brief provides the outline framework on which a detailed specification of work should be based. It is advisable that archaeological organisations forward the specification to the County Archaeological Officer or his representative for validation before submitting costed proposals to the agency commissioning the evaluation. Sections 1 – 4 of this brief relate specifically to this evaluation. Annex 1-5 provides the archaeological contractor with a procedural framework outlining general good practice and requirements pertaining to all archaeological evaluation projects carried out in Oxfordshire.
- 1.2 Planning permission has been sought from south Oxfordshire District Council for the development on the site. Due to the potential for archaeological deposits to be present the results of an archaeological evaluation will need to be submitted along with any planning application for the site.
- 1.3 The evaluation will aim to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological deposits within the area affected by invasive development. This evidence will form the basis of any proposals for appropriate mitigation measures that may seek to limit the damage to significant archaeological deposits, and should aim to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further investigation be required. The evaluation will include any post-excavation work and publication requirements resulting from it.

### **2. BACKGROUND:**

#### **2.1 Site Location and Description**

- 2.1.1 The development site is located within the centre of Dorchester on the eastern side of the High Street and west of Queens Street (SU 5780 9432). It lies at approximately 48m OD and the geology comprises sand and gravel deposits overlying Gault Formation. The site is currently in use as a car park.

#### **2.2 Planning Background**

- 2.2.1 Planning consent has been sought from South Oxfordshire District Council for the alternation and conversion of the existing hotel and the erection of 3 dwellings (P15/S4230/FUL).
- 2.2.2 Due to the potential for archaeological deposits to be present the results of an archaeological evaluation will need to be submitted before the determination of this planning application.

#### **2.3 Archaeological Background**

2.3.1 The site is located in an area of considerable archaeological interest within the area of the Roman small town of Dorchester. The main scheduled area of the Roman town is located just 35m south west of the application site and the proposed area is within the area walled town itself with the proposed line of the northern defences crossing the site. A further scheduled area of the Town which includes the extra mural area of settlement is located immediately north of the proposal site. Roman features have been recorded immediately east and west of the proposed site and Roman finds have been found in numerous locations in the immediate vicinity of the Hotel.

2.3.2 It is therefore very likely that further archaeological features related to the Roman town will be encountered during the development and any well preserved features could be considered to be of demonstrably equivalent significance to the scheduled site.

### 3. **REQUIREMENT FOR WORK:**

3.1 This field evaluation has been required in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) because of the presence of known sites of archaeological interest within the immediate vicinity of the development. Should important archaeological remains be revealed, this evaluation will form the first stage of a mitigation procedure.

3.2 The evaluation should aim to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within those areas affected. The evaluation report produced will present a digest of information on the character and significance of the deposits under review and this report will form the basis of any proposals for appropriate further action. The evaluation should also aim to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

3.3 Any mitigation resulting from the evaluation report will seek to limit the damage to significant archaeological deposits. The developer will be responsible for accommodating the archaeological remains by:-

a) Physical preservation in situ, which can often be achieved through design adaptations, or, if this is not possible;

b) By preserving the archaeology on record through a full recording action. Less significant archaeological deposits may be dealt with through a monitoring and recording exercise carried out during the construction programme.

### 4. **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS EVALUATION:**

4.1 An archaeological trial trench 15m long by 1.6m wide will need to be undertaken within the footprint of the proposed three new dwellings. A trench layout plan should be agreed prior to the trenching commencing. Provision should be made for taking environmental/organic samples where appropriate.

4.2 The excavation under the supervision of a competent archaeologist is to be taken down to the top of 'natural' or the top of any significant archaeological level, whichever is the higher. While the surface of the exposed archaeological horizon

should be cleaned for the purpose of clarifying the remains, archaeological features should generally only be sampled sufficiently to characterise and date them. Full excavation of features should not be undertaken at this stage. Care should be taken not to damage archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation.

Richard Oram  
Planning Archaeologist  
County Archaeological Services

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