



Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

New Road Farm,
Melksham,
Wiltshire



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Non-Technical Summary

This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by HCUK Group, on behalf of Bloor Homes, to inform an outline application for a proposed residential development on land at New Road Farm, Melksham, Wiltshire. The site area has been subject to both geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation.

Based on the information contained within the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (WHER), supplemented by historic mapping and documentary research, the Site does not contain any designated archaeological assets, where there would be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ and against development.

Assessment of HER data and cartographic analysis has shown that the Site was undeveloped land since at least the medieval period. Ridge and furrow has been confirmed within the Site area from aerial photographic evidence as recorded on the HER, as well as more recent geophysical survey and Lidar analysis. This may be of medieval or post medieval date. An possibly medieval earthwork bank runs across the southern part of the Site running parallel with Sandridge Common road.

The following archaeological potentials for remains to be present have been determined from the initial desk-based assessment. There is a low potential for early prehistoric (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic) remains to be present within the Site area. There is a low to moderate potential, for Bronze Age remains to be present based on information held on the HER, but a low potential for Iron Age remains. There is considered to be a moderate potential for Roman remains based on the recorded evidence of settlements to the northwest and southeast of the Site. Due to the lack of early medieval records, the archaeological potential is considered low. The Site lies in an area of medieval agricultural land that would have surrounded Melksham and buried remains of boundaries and ridge and furrow survive within the site of likely medieval and post medieval date. There is a negligible potential for significant remains of modern date to be present within the Site.

Geophysical survey was undertaken across the site in January 2024 by Sumo Services which identified a possible medieval or post medieval boundary bank and medieval ridge and furrow across the area. A few possible archaeological anomalies were identified. Most other features identified were considered likely to be the results of drainage or other agricultural activity. In March 2025 the site was subject to trial trench evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology which identified a single undated pit and a number of modern archaeological features. Nothing of archaeological significance was identified. Following evaluation it is considered that the Site has a very low potential to contain any significant archaeological remains.

The scope of any further archaeological works that would be needed in advance or during development of the Site would need to be confirmed with the archaeological officer of Wiltshire County Council in their capacity as archaeological advisor to the LPA. Based on the results of the geophysical survey and trial trenching, it is considered unlikely that any further archaeological mitigation works would be needed.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1** This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by James Meek of HCUK Group on behalf of Bloor Homes South West. The outline planning application is for proposed *'residential development; public open space including formal play space and allotments; sustainable drainage systems and associated infrastructure; a 100 place nursery and access points for pedestrians and cyclists. All matters are reserved except for access, the principal point of access is to be provided from a new northern arm onto an improved arrangement of the Eastern Way/A3102 roundabout junction and an emergency access onto the A3102.'*
- 1.2** The site in question lies at New Road Farm, Melksham, Wiltshire (Figures 1 and 2), occupying an area of approximately 14.95ha and centred at NGR 392060 164480. It is hereafter referred to as the Site.
- 1.3** By way of introduction, the Site is presently undeveloped and comprises a series of agricultural fields. Access into the site is from the A3102 (Sandridge Common) which forms the southern boundary of the Site.
- 1.4** The purpose of this assessment is to determine and assess the archaeological potential of the Site and to assess the significance of any relevant heritage assets identified. The report is informed by site inspection, historical information, and by data relating to heritage assets. It seeks to provide sufficient information to allow an informed understanding of the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of those assets, and to consider the need for solutions (design, engineering etc) where necessary. Designated and non-designated built heritage is addressed in an accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by HCUK¹.
- 1.5** The report considers heritage assets of archaeological interest, including finds/findspots of artefactual and ecofactual material (e.g. stone tools, bone), and locations, features or objects referenced from historic documents. Where

¹ HCUK 2024

appropriate, it refers to archaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits, including sub-surface archaeological remains of features, buildings and structures.

1.6 This assessment has been prepared in accordance with Standards and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment² published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). It takes into account the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other local planning policy and guidance where relevant.

1.7 This desk-based assessment comprises an examination of digital data held by the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (WHER) together with documentary research. The HER data search was updated in October 2025. The assessment incorporates a map regression indicating the impact of change over time.

1.8 This data has been collected for an area comprising a 1km radius of the Site boundary, which is referred to as the 'study area'. This radius has been selected on the basis of professional judgment as being sufficient to determine the archaeological potential of the Site, taking into account its location, topography, and character.

Geology

1.9 The British Geological Survey identifies the underlying solid geology across the Site as being Oxford Clay Formation – Mudstone, a sedimentary bedrock formed between 166.1 and 157.3 million years ago during the Jurassic period³. (Figure 3)

1.10 No superficial deposits are recorded within the Site, with an area of Head - Clay and silt, a sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period located in an area to the north of the Site⁴. A band of Alluvium - Clay, silt, sand and gravel, a sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 11.8 thousand years ago and the present during the Quaternary period, runs east to west to the south of the Site following the line of a stream course (a tributary of the River Avon).⁵ (Figure 3)

² CIfA 2020

³ <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

- 1.11** The soils are described as 'Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils'⁶.

Topography

- 1.12** The Site occupies an area of approximately 14.95ha.
- 1.13** The Site area is relatively level at between 43m and 44.5m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) (Figure 4). There is a general rise towards the area of New Road Farm. The land slightly rises around the Site before dropping into the river valleys to the west and south, and then a larger rise around 1km to the east.

Site Visit

- 1.14** A site visit/walkover was undertaken on Wednesday 27th April 2024 by Jess Reeves ACIfA, Archaeological Clerk of Works at HCUK Group Ltd. The site areas laid out in Figure 2 are referred to within the following text.
- 1.15** The Site was entered via a gateway located centrally along its southern boundary. This gate provides access onto the A3102 (Sandridge Common) roadway, which runs east-west along the southern extent of the Site. The southern end of the Site consists of three irregularly shaped fields (Areas 6-9). These fields are laid to pasture, and are bounded by mature hedgerows and wooden fences, as is the whole of the Site. Overall, the ground rises slightly towards the eastern side of the Site.
- 1.16** The central southern field is divided in two by a drainage channel which cuts across it north-west to south-east. The sides of this channel are very regular, it appears that it has been frequently cleared and maintained using a mechanical excavator. A brick-built crossing point towards the northern end of the ditch connects the two halves of this field. A line of telegraph poles crosses the Site's southern fields in east-west alignment. A rectangular, concrete foundation lies just inside the southern entrance to this field, most recently it has been used for manure storage, but its shape would suggest that it was previously part of a small stable block. The

⁶ <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>

drainage channel, brick-built crossing, telegraph poles and concrete foundation may have all had direct impacts on the deposits below.



Photograph 1: North-facing view from just inside the southern entrance to the Site. The concrete foundation and telegraph poles are clearly visible.



Photograph 2: Northern-facing view from within the central southern field of the Site. The post-medieval bank feature (MW173984) is just visible across the centre of the photograph.

- 1.17** Ridge and furrow earthworks are recorded across the entirety of the Site (MW173983), with the singular exception of the southeasternmost field. These earthworks were not visible anywhere within the Site during the walkover. However, it is possible that the long grass was masking them, and that a slight gradient may still be extant. A post-medieval bank, likely a headland associated with the ridge and furrow, is aligned broadly east-west across the central southern and south-westernmost fields within the Site (MW173984). This bank is still visible, though it is not very pronounced.
- 1.18** The northwestern part of the Site is formed of a single large, rectangular field (Areas 4-5). This field is once again divided by the same drainage channel which continues from the south. The channel is aligned north-east to south-west across this central field, and another brick-built crossing point joins the two halves of the field near its centre. Views to the south and east of the Site are dominated by the new housing estates which border the Site in these directions.



Photograph 3: Western-facing view from within the large field in the northwestern part of the Site. The new housing estate to the west of the Site is visible in the background.



Photograph 4: South-facing view of one of the brick-built crossing points over the drainage channel.



Photograph 5: Western-facing view from within the large field located at the centre of the Site. One of the scars left by the removal of the horse troughs is clearly visible.

1.19 All of the fields within the Site also have a number of rectangular holes throughout them, where water troughs for horses have recently stood/been removed. The scars left by these water troughs indicate that they have had a direct impact on the

deposits below. A single circular crop mark was noted within the south-eastern corner of this field, it is possible that this could indicate a sub-surface archaeological feature, or alternatively fungal growth or even the former location of a circular cattle feeder.



Photograph 6: North-western-facing view of a circular crop mark identified in the large central field within the Site.

1.20 The proposed access road in the northeastern part of the Site will cross through three small fields, the southernmost is approximately square, while the northernmost two are rectangular (Areas 1-3). As with all other areas of the Site, these fields are rather boggy and they are covered with wheel ruts. A single electricity pylon also stands within the second-to-northernmost field. These wheel ruts and the pylon have had a direct impact on the deposits below. Views from within the northern end of the Site are dominated by the surrounding agricultural landscape.



*Photograph 7: South-western-facing view from within the central southern field of the Site.
The extensive wheel ruts within this area are clearly visible.*



Photograph 8: Eastern-facing view from within the second-to-northernmost field within the Site. The electricity pylon in this field can be clearly seen.

2. Methodology

Sources

2.1 In preparing this assessment we have compiled readily available archaeological and historical information from documentary and cartographic sources, primarily:

- Wiltshire HER for known archaeological sites, monuments and findspots within 1km of the Site (i.e. the study area) (Updated search in October 2025).
- Maps and documents held online.
- The National Heritage List for England (Historic England).
- LiDAR data and aerial photographs available online.
- Aerial photographs provided by Wiltshire HER.
- Geological data.
- Site visit observations.
- Geophysical Survey results (Sumo Services)⁷.
- Archaeological Trial Trench results (Cotswold Archaeology)⁸.

2.2 The information gathered from the above sources has been verified and augmented as far as possible by site inspection and assessment, in order to arrive at conclusions on the significance of the various heritage assets and archaeological remains that have been identified.

Assessment

2.3 The assessment seeks to understand and define the significance of heritage assets identified from the sources above, taking into account the categories of special interest defined in the NPPF, primarily archaeological interest, historic interest, architectural interest and artistic interest.

2.4 The importance of a heritage asset is the overall value assigned to it based on its heritage significance, reflecting its statutory designation or, in the case of undesignated assets, the professional judgement of the assessor (Table 1).

⁷ Sumo Services 2024

⁸ Cotswold Archaeology 2025

Table 1: Criteria for Assessing the Importance of Heritage Assets

Importance of the asset	Criteria
Very high	World Heritage Sites and other assets of equal international importance
High	Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Battlefields, Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, and undesignated heritage assets of equal importance
Medium	Conservation Areas, Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens, Grade II Listed Buildings, heritage assets on local lists and undesignated assets of equal importance
Low	Undesignated heritage assets of lesser importance

- 2.5** The assessment also considers change to the setting and significance of heritage assets, where appropriate.

Archaeological Potential

- 2.6** The report includes:
- an assessment of the archaeological potential of the Site;
 - an assessment of the significance of any archaeological remains that may be present; and
 - an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on heritage assets, both in terms of physical impact and (where relevant) change to setting.

3. Relevant Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework

3.1 The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of 7th February 2025 as being made up of four main constituents, architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest.

3.2 The assessments of setting and significance (and the assessments of impact) are normally made with primary reference to the four main elements of special significance identified in the NPPF.

3.3 Paragraph 216 of the NPPF describes the approach to be taken towards non-designated heritage assets, as follows:

"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

3.4 Footnote 75 of the NPPF, which is attached to paragraph 213, states that "Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets." Further guidance on non-designated heritage assets is contained in National Planning Practice Guidance, as revised in July 2019, notably paragraph 040 which states that "Irrespective of how they are identified, it is important that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence", and paragraph 041 which in full reads as follows:

"What are non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest and how important are they?"

The National Planning Policy Framework identifies two categories of non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest:

(1) Those that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments and are therefore considered subject to the same policies as those for designated heritage assets (National Planning Policy Framework footnote 63). They are of 3 types:

those that have yet to be formally assessed for designation.

those that have been assessed as being nationally important and therefore, capable of designation, but which the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has exercised his/her discretion not to designate.

those that are incapable of being designated by virtue of being outside the scope of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 because of their physical nature.

The reason why many nationally important monuments are not scheduled is set out in the document Scheduled Monuments, published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Information on location and significance of such assets is found in the same way as for all heritage assets. Judging whether sites fall into this category may be assisted by reference to the criteria for scheduling monuments. Further information on scheduled monuments can be found on the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's website.

(2) Other non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest. By comparison this is a much larger category of lesser heritage significance, although still subject to the conservation objective. On occasion the understanding of a site may change following assessment and evaluation prior to a planning decision and move it from this category to the first.

Where an asset is thought to have archaeological interest, the potential knowledge which may be unlocked by investigation may be harmed even by minor disturbance, because the context in which archaeological evidence is found is crucial to furthering understanding.

Decision-making regarding such assets requires a proportionate response by local planning authorities. Where an initial assessment indicates that the site on which development is proposed includes or has potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, applicants should be required to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. However, it is estimated that following the initial assessment of archaeological interest only a small proportion – around 3% – of all planning applications justify a requirement for detailed assessment."

3.5

Paragraph 218 of the NPPF also makes provision for the recording of heritage assets that are likely to be demolished or destroyed by development.

Legislation

Relevant Local Policies

- 3.6** The Wiltshire Core Strategy (Adopted January 2015) includes the Melksham Area Strategy section (Core Policy 15) and paragraph 5.83 states '*development at Melksham should protect the historic environment and in particular should protect the historic setting of the Spa*' and '*Melksham will be a thriving and accessible market town that respects its heritage and rural environment.*'
- 3.7** The Wiltshire Core Strategy includes Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment.
- 3.8** The Wiltshire Local Plan 2020 – 2038 is in the review stage (Stage 2 review stage is due to commence in November 2025), but a similar Historic Environment Policy is included within the Pre-submission draft (see below).

Table 2: Local Policies

Policy	Test
Wiltshire Core Strategy: Core Policy 58	Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment <i>Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment. Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:</i> <i>i. nationally significant archaeological remains</i> <i>ii. World Heritage Sites within and adjacent to Wiltshire</i> <i>iii. buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest</i> <i>iv. the special character or appearance of conservation areas</i> <i>v. historic parks and gardens</i> <i>vi. important landscapes, including registered battlefields and townscapes.</i> <i>Distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a</i>

	<i>sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The potential contribution of these heritage assets towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will also be utilised where this can be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner in accordance with Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping).</i> <i>Heritage assets at risk will be monitored and development proposals that improve their condition will be encouraged. The advice of statutory and local consultees will be sought in consideration of such applications.</i>
Wiltshire Local Plan pre- submission draft September 2023	Policy 99 Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment <i>Development should conserve or enhance the historic environment. Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:</i> <i>i. nationally significant archaeological remains;</i> <i>ii. world heritage sites within and adjacent to Wiltshire;</i> <i>iii. buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest;</i> <i>iv. the special character or appearance of conservation areas;</i> <i>v. historic parks and gardens; vi. important landscapes, including registered battlefields and townscapes.</i> <i>Any harm to the significance of designated heritage assets which will result from development proposals will be required to be justified and outweighed by public benefits (including heritage benefits) at a level appropriate to the significance of the asset and the harm caused. Any harm to the significance of undesignated assets which will result from development proposals must be carefully balanced</i>

	<i>considering the significance of the asset and the harm caused. Distinctive elements of Wiltshire’s historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.</i> <i>The potential contribution of heritage assets towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will be utilised where this can be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner in accordance with Policy 98 (Ensuring high quality design and place shaping). The sensitive reuse of historic buildings and spaces will be supported and opportunities for the historic environment to inform and shape new development and regeneration projects will be encouraged. The adaptation of heritage assets in accordance with Policy 85 (Sustainable construction and low carbon energy) using appropriate materials and techniques which conserve their fabric and significance will be encouraged. Proposals for change affecting the historic environment (which require planning permission or listed building consent) should be accompanied and informed by an assessment of heritage significance and the impact of the proposals on this significance, making reference to the information held in the Historic Environment Record. Where a proposal includes potential archaeological interest a desk based assessment, and if necessary, field evaluation should be carried out and submitted with the proposal.</i> <i>Development proposals that improve the condition of heritage assets at risk will be supported.</i>
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4. Archaeological Background

Introduction

- 4.1** There are no designated archaeological heritage assets such as scheduled monuments or registered battlefields within the Site or in the study area, and for which there would be a presumption in favour of preservation in situ and against development proceeding.
- 4.2** The Wiltshire HER records two heritage assets within the Site and a further 79 HER records within the 1km study area.

Timescales

- 4.3** Timescales used in this assessment:

Table 3: Timescales

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic	c.450,000 – 12,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic	c. 12,000 – 4000 BC	
Neolithic	c.4000 – 1800 BC	
Bronze Age	c.1800 – 600 BC	
Iron Age	c.600 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British)	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Saxon / Early Medieval	c. AD 410 – AD 1066	
Medieval	1066 –1485	
Post-Medieval Period	1485 – 1900	
Modern	1901 – Present	

- 4.4** The HER data is included in this report at Figures 6, 7, 12 and 16. The data is laid out in tables 4 to 10.

Prehistoric

Table 4: Records of prehistoric date recorded on the HER within 1km

HER Ref.	Name	Monument Type	Period
ST96NW151	Bronze Age Axehead, Melksham Without	Findspot	Bronze Age
MWI74524	Pits and Ditches, Little Snarlton Farm, East Melksham	Pit; field boundary	Early Bronze Age to Medieval

4.5 The Wiltshire HER records two sites of prehistoric date within the 1km study area (Figure 5 and Table 4).

4.6 The earliest known archaeology within the 1km study area is of Early Bronze Age date and relates to the site of a pit and ditches recorded around 330m to the south of the Site during excavations at Little Snarlton farm in 2010 (MWI74524). The pit appears to be of early Bronze Age date, containing Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age arrowhead. The ditches may well be of medieval date.

4.7 The other prehistoric record is also of Bronze Age date and relates to the find of a socketed axe head, miscast with a flaw in face, said to have been found in association with a fragment of bronze sword or similar object (ST96NW151). This was recovered from a location around 850m to the northeast.

4.8 The potential for prehistoric remains of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Iron Age is considered to be very low based on the paucity of identified remains of these periods within the 1km study area. The potential for remains of Bronze Age date is considered low to moderate based on the findspot and feature recorded on the HER. Should any prehistoric remains be present, they would likely be of low (local) to regional (moderate) archaeological importance.

Roman

Table 5: Records of Roman date recorded on the HER within 1km

HER Ref.	Name	Monument Type	Period
ST96NW313	Romano-British Pottery, Lower Woodrow	Findspot	Roman
ST96SW305	Roman Pottery, West of Eight Acre Plantation	Findspot	Roman
ST96SW306	Roman Pit and Pottery Scatter, West of Eight Acre Plantation	Findspot	Roman
ST96SW307	Roman Pottery, North East of Snarlton Farm	Findspot	Roman
ST96SW308	Roman Ditch, South West of Eight Acre Plantation	Ditch	Roman
MWI75560	Roman Settlement, North of Melksham	Settlement	Roman
MWI78364	Roman Pit, South of Blackmore Farm	Pit	Roman

MWI78365	Roman Ditches, South of Blackmore Farm	Double ditched enclosure; ditch	Roman
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- 4.9** There are eight records of Roman date recorded on the HER within the 1km study area (Figure 5 and Table 5).. These include four findspots of Roman pottery at Lower Woodrow 610m to the north of the Site (ST96NW313); northeast of Snarlton Farm (ST96SW307) 690m to the southeast; and two adjacent scatters west of Eight Acre Plantation also 690m to the southeast (ST96SW305 and ST96SW306). The latter record also notes that a Roman pit was also recovered in this area, as well as a Roman ditch (ST96SW308).
- 4.10** The remains of a Roman settlement have been recorded around 880m to the northwest of the Site, north of Melksham at Woodrow Road (MWI75560) through geophysical survey and excavations.
- 4.11** A Roman pit and ditches were found south of Blackmore Farm, around 660m southeast of the Site in the area where a number of finds and other Roman features were identified (MWI78364 and MWI78365).
- 4.12** Based on the evidence contained on the Wiltshire HER, there are two known areas of Roman activity, one to the northwest revealed by geophysical survey and excavation (MWI75560), and a larger concentration of remains to the southeast west of Eight Acre Plantation. These clearly indicate Roman activity within the study area, although none is known within the Site itself.
- 4.13** There is considered to be a moderate potential for Roman remains to be present within the Site. If the remains of settlement were revealed these would be of local (low) to regional (moderate) archaeological importance. Remains of agricultural activity, such as land divisions, would be of local (low) archaeological importance.

Saxon/Early Medieval

Table 6: Records of Saxon/Early Medieval date recorded on the HER within 1km

HER Ref.	Name	Monument Type	Period
MWI79235	Anglo-Saxon Meeting Site, Kite's Stile	Moot	Saxon

- 4.14** The Wiltshire HER records a single site of Saxon/early medieval date within the study area, that of a Moot site (or meeting place) at Kite's Stile located 300m north of the Site (MWI79235; Figure 5, Table 6). The HER notes that this is '*the possible site of the Melksham Hundred Moot*'.
- 4.15** Melksham is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, indicating a settlement had been established there prior to the Norman Conquest. The Domes day book records it comprised 234 households, w which would put it in the largest 20% of settlements recorded in Domesday⁹. The settlement may have covered quite a large area at that time, being dispersed and likely to encompass farms beyond any focal point of settlement within Melksham itself. It is likely that the Site was situated within an agricultural landscape surrounding the settlement at Melksham.
- 4.16** There is a low potential for the Site to contain as yet unrecorded archaeological remains of early medieval/Saxon date. It is anticipated that these, if present, would be of low (local) significance and probably associated with agriculture.

Medieval

Table 7: Records of Post Medieval date recorded on the HER within 1km

HER Ref.	Name	Monument Type	Period
ST96SW452	Medieval Settlement, South East of Snarlton Farm	Settlement	Medieval
ST96SW461	Blackmore Farm	Settlement	Medieval
ST96NW459	Woodrow Medieval Settlement	Settlement	Medieval
ST96SW604	Possible Medieval Settlement, South East of Lambourne Farm	Settlement; ridge and furrow; field boundary	Medieval
MWI64723	Medieval Ridge and Furrow, Melksham Town Football Club	Ridge and furrow	Medieval to Late 19 th century
MWI73978	Medieval Ridge and Furrow, Melksham	Ridge and furrow; field boundary; plough headland	Medieval
MWI73979	Medieval Platform, Clackers Brook	Platform	Medieval
MWI73981	Medieval Ridge and Furrow, South of Clackers Brook	Ridge and furrow; field boundary; plough headland	Medieval
MWI73982	Medieval Ridge and Furrow, North of Clackers Brook	Ridge and furrow; field boundary	Medieval

⁹ <https://opendomesday.org/place/ST9063/melksham/>

MWI73984	Boundary Bank, Sandridge Common	Boundary bank	Medieval to late 19 th century
MWI73985	Ridge and Furrow, North of Melksham	Ridge and furrow	Medieval
MWI73990	Medieval Settlement, North of Melksham	Ridge and furrow; field boundary; settlement	Medieval
MWI73991	Ridge and Furrow, West of Melksham	Ridge and furrow; field boundary	Medieval
MWI73993	Ridge and Furrow, South of Bezzle's Farm	Ridge and furrow; field boundary	Medieval
MWI73994	Medieval Ridge and Furrow, North East of Snarlton Farm	Ridge and furrow	Medieval to Late C19
MWI74525	Ditch and Pit, Little Snarlton Farm, East Melksham	Farmstead	Medieval
MWI74526	Medieval Iron Working Floors, Little Snarlton Farm, East Melksham	Iron working site	Medieval

4.17 The Wiltshire HER records seventeen records of medieval date within the 1km study area (Figures 5 and 6, Table 7).

4.18 Of these, many represent the remains of ridge and furrow field systems that would have surrounded the medieval settlement at Melksham, including remains of field boundaries and headlands. These include an area of ridge and furrow at the Melksham Town Football Club (MWI64723) 850m to the south; a larger area 850m to the southwest (MWI73978); a large area south of Clackers Brook 850m south (MWI73981); an area north of Clackers Brook 600m south (MWI73982); an area 900m to the west (MWI73985); an area 880m to the northwest (MWI73991); an expansive area south of Bezzle's Farm around 900m to the northwest (MWI73993); and an area northeast of Snarlton Farm 750m to the southeast (MWI73994).

4.19 Within the Site lies a medieval boundary bank (MWI73984) which runs east to west across the southern part of the Site and extends further to the west, running parallel with the road to the south (Sandridge Common). The HER records post medieval ridge and furrow in the fields within the site, respecting the bank, although the bank was considered to be earlier than the ridge and furrow. It is probable that medieval ridge and furrow would have been present here also.

4.20 The HER records a number of possible medieval settlement sites in the study area, though it is likely they represent farmsteads rather than any nucleated settlement centre. These include an area southeast of Lambourne Farm 600m to the

southwest, where ridge and furrow and field boundaries are also recorded (ST96SW604). A possible medieval settlement is recorded north of Melksham, 800m northeast of the Site (MWI73990). A possible settlement is recorded southeast of Snarlton Farm (ST96SW452) 930m to the southeast of the Site, where an iron working area is also recorded (MWI74526). A possible settlement is recorded at Woodrow some 850m northeast of the Site (ST96NW459). The closest record of settlement comes from Blackmore Farm, which lies 280m east of the Site (ST96SW461).

4.21 A likely medieval platform, presumably for a house platform, has been recorded at Clackers Brook 680m to the south (MWI73979). Medieval iron working floors have also been recorded at Little Snarlton Farm

4.22 As discussed above, Melksham was already a sizeable settlement by the time of the Norman Conquest, and continued to expand throughout the medieval period. There is no evidence of any settlement extending into the Site area. The Site area would have been located within agricultural land surrounding the main settlement at Melksham. There is considered to be a high potential for medieval archaeological remains to be present, but they would likely be associated with agricultural activities and of local (low) archaeological importance.

Post Medieval

Table 8: Records of Post Medieval date recorded on the HER within 1km

HER Ref.	Name	Monument Type	Period
MWI51158	Mission Chapel of St Andrews or Mission Hall	Chapel of ease	Post Medieval
MWI60878	Boxwood Cottage or 357 Snarlton Lane	Detached house	Post Medieval
MWI73864	Ridge and Furrow, West of Green Shed Farm	Ridge and furrow	Post Medieval
MWI73970	Post Medieval Ridge and Furrow, South of Sandridge Common	Ridge and furrow; narrow ridge and furrow	Post Medieval
MWI73977	Ridge and Furrow, Melksham	Ridge and furrow	Post Medieval
MWI73983	Ridge and Furrow, East of Melksham	Ridge and furrow; narrow ridge and furrow	Post Medieval
MWI73986	Ridge and Furrow, North of Forest Farm	Ridge and furrow; narrow ridge and furrow	Post Medieval
MWI73992	Gravel Pit, West of Melksham	Gravel pit	Post Medieval to 20 th century
MWI51158	Mission Chapel of St Andrews or Mission Hall	Chapel of ease	Post Medieval
MWI60878	Boxwood Cottage or 357 Snarlton Lane	Detached house	Post Medieval
MWI73864	Ridge and Furrow, West of Green Shed Farm	Ridge and furrow	Post Medieval

MWI73970	Post Medieval Ridge and Furrow, South of Sandridge Common	Ridge and furrow; narrow ridge and furrow	Post Medieval
MWI73977	Ridge and Furrow, Melksham	Ridge and furrow	Post Medieval
MWI44468	Bowerhill Lodge Farmhouse (now subdivided into Berkeley House, Meadow View, Butlers Quarter and Dovecote Cottage)	Dovecote; farmhouse	18 th century
MWI44497	Granary at Forest Farm	Timber framed building; granary	18 th century
MWI56724	Primitive Methodist Church, Melksham Forest	Methodist chapel	18 th century
MWI68756	Bowerhill Lodge Farm	Farmstead	18 th century
MWI68767	Woodrow House Farm	Farmstead	18 th century
MWI68768	Forest Farm	Farmstead	18 th century
MWI68796	Blackmore House (Blackmore Farm)	Farmstead	18 th century
MWI44496	Forest Farmhouse or Old Farmhouse, Forest Farm	Farmhouse	Early 18 th century
ST96SW541	Sandridge Park	Landscape park; walled garden	Early 18 th century to late 19 th century
MWI55197	320 Snarlton Lane	Semi-detached house	Early 18 th century to late 19 th century
SU09NE530	Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal	Canal	Late 18 th century to Edwardian
MWI68761	Site of Farmstead, South-South East of Malthouse Farm	Farmstead	19 th century
MWI68762	Site of Farmstead on Snarlton Lane	Farmstead	19 th century
MWI68763	8 Church Lane	Farmstead	19 th century
MWI68764	Malthouse Farm	Farmstead	19 th century
MWI68765	Site of Woodrow Farm	Farmstead	19 th century
MWI68766	Site of Outfarm in Melksham Forest	Outfarm	19 th century
MWI68794	Farmstead, South East of Forest Farm	Farmstead	19 th century
MWI68795	Manor Farm	Farmstead	19 th century
MWI68797	Site of Outfarm, North East of Little Snarlton Farm	Outfarm	19 th century
MWI68798	Site of Outfarm, North of Little Snarlton Farm	Outfarm	19 th century
MWI68799	Little Snarlton Farm	Farmstead	19 th century
MWI68800	Snarlton Farm	Farmstead	19 th century
MWI68801	Site of Outfarm on Snarlton Lane	Outfarm	19 th century
MWI68854	Farmstead, South West of New Road Farm	Farmstead	19 th century
MWI68877	Site of Outfarm, South West of Hack Farm	Outfarm	19 th century
MWI76093	Canal Bridge, 5 Lowbourne Road	Canal bridge	19 th century
MWI76095	Forest Farm Culvert, Melksham	Culvert	19 th century

4.23 The HER records 41 sites of post medieval date within the 1km study area (Figure 5 and 6, Table 8).

4.24 Ridge and furrow of post medieval date is recorded across the Site (MWI73983). The post medieval date has been ascribed due to them being quite narrow,

although there is a good possibility that earlier medieval ridge and furrow was also present within the Site area based on its location. The ridge and furrow is just visible on recent Lidar data and has also been confirmed by geophysical survey undertaken within the site area (see below for more information). The area of ridge and furrow extends quite a distance to the northwest, west and east of the Site. Further ridge and furrow of post medieval date lies to the north (MWI73864 and MWI73986), southwest (MWI73977) and west/southwest (MWI73970). These records show that the Site was part of the agricultural landscape surrounding Melksham and other settlements at that time.

- 4.25** The numerous other records of post medieval date (including 18th and 19th century date) relate more to the built development of the area including buildings and structures within Melksham and the surrounding area. These do not provide any more information regarding the archaeological potential of the site and are not discussed further.
- 4.26** The earliest map to show the Site area in any detail is the 1818 Original Surveyor's Drawing of Bradford in Wiltshire (Figure 7, top). This shows the site as open land to the north of the road which was already present at that time. A trackway runs through the eastern side of the site leading through an area marked as Blackmore Forest to the roadway to the south. The western side of the Site area is labelled as Melksham Forest. Blackmore Farm is shown to the southeast. There is no evidence that either of these areas was woodland, clearly having been agricultural land with ridge and furrow, since the medieval/post medieval period.
- 4.27** The 1837 Tithe Map of the parish of Melksham shows clearer detail of the field layouts at that time (Figure 7, bottom). Unfortunately the Tithe Apportionment was not available to consult and find out field names. At that time the site was split into 9 fields, with the Sandridge Common Road forming the southern boundary of the site. The field layout is very similar to that which exists today, excluding the western most field was split into three parts. The site of buildings in the area of New Road Farm are shown, but this predates the extant buildings of the farm. The buildings that lie within the centre of the site (but outside of the site boundary) are also present on the Tithe map comprising a number of small house plots.
- 4.28** The 1886 first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map (Figure 8, top) shows that the field boundaries within the area had been altered to the layout as exists today with

the southwestern field amended to a single field. The culvert that splits the two central fields to the north and south are not shown. More detail is shown of the buildings within the centre of the site (but outside the red line boundary), with plot divisions shown and two wells. A small pond lies at the junction of the fields on the western side of the site.

4.29 Based on the information held on the HER and cartographic evidence, the Site was used as agricultural land throughout the 19th century. There is considered to be a high potential for archaeological remains of post medieval date to be present within the Site. Such remains would be considered to be of local (low) archaeological importance.

Modern

Table 9: Records of Modern date recorded on the HER within 1km

HER Ref.	Name	Monument Type	Period
MWI58281	1 to 8 Barnwell Road	Semi-detached house	20 th century
MWI58921	Sandridge Road Garage	Petrol station	20 th century
MWI48631	Greystones	Detached house	Mid-20 th century to late 20 th century
MWI73959	Emergency Water Supply, Murray Walk	Emergency water supply	Second World War
MWI73969	Emergency Water Supply, Forrest Road	Emergency water supply	Second World War
MWI73972	Trenches, West of Awdry Avenue	Trench	Second World War
MWI73976	Military Buildings, South of Melksham	Military building	Second World War

4.30 The HER has seven records of modern date within the 1km study are (Figures 5 and 6, Table 9).

4.31 The sites include modern buildings, a garage and a number of former World War II features, including water supplies, trenches and buildings.

4.32 The 1900 OS map (Figure 8, bottom) shows the same layout as that from the first edition, but with the curving culvert (that still exists) now in place by this time, cutting the main south-central and north-central fields in two. More buildings are shown in the area of New Road Farm, and a similar layout shown in the central area. There is no change, other than additional buildings in the central part of the

area and at New Road Farm on the 1924 and 1935 OS maps (Figure 9 top and bottom).

4.33 The 1969/71 OS map (Figure 10, top) is the first to show the modern farm buildings at New Road Farm. It also indicates a slight change in the shape of the pond on the western side of the Site. The 1987/91 OS map (Figure 10, bottom) indicates that the pond has now been removed, as has the field boundary on the northern side of the north field. Modern housing developments have started to be constructed to the west of Melksham and east of the site.

4.34 Modern Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs held on Google Earth (not illustrated) show further changes in recent years from 1999 to 2023 with additional housing development at Melksham on the western side of the Site, but no change within the Site area itself.

4.35 Based on HER records, and the development indicated by map regression and Google Earth, although the Site will contain modern remains associated with agricultural practices, these would be considered of negligible archaeological importance.

Unknown

Table 10: Records of Unknown date recorded on the HER within 1km

HER Ref.	Name	Monument Type	Period
MWI62966	Manor Farm	Farmhouse	Unknown
MWI72764	Woodrow Farm (also known as 207 and 210 Woodrow Road)	Farmhouse	Unknown
MWI72800	Gazebo, Bowerhill Lodge Farm	Gazebo	Unknown
MWI74439	Undated Pits, Melksham Town Football Club	Pit	Unknown
MWI74440	Undated Ditches, Melksham Town Football Club	Ditch	Unknown
MWI74485	Field Boundaries, Sandridge Solar Farm	Field boundary	Unknown
MWI74725	Ditches, North of Melksham	Ditch	Unknown
MWI74726	Undated Pits, North of Melksham	Pit	Unknown
MWI74757	Banks, East of Melksham	Bank (earthwork)	Unknown
MWI78674	Possible Roman Ditches, Blackmore Farm	Segmented ditch	Unknown

4.36 The HER holds 10 records of unknown date within the study area (Figures 5 and 6; Table 10). These include features (pits and ditches) likely to be of later prehistoric or Roman date, mostly in areas where other remains have already been recorded.

They do not add any changes to the identified potentials for remains discussed above.

Previous Archaeological Work

Table 11: Previous Archaeological Investigations recorded on the HER within 1km

Event Ref	Name
EWI3540	Watching Brief on the Beanacre to St Edith's Marsh Gas Pipeline
EWI7670	Excavation at Melksham
EWI10611	Evaluation at Land South of Blackmore Farm
EWI10679	Geophysical Survey at New Road Farm
EWI10954	Evaluation at Land South of Snarlton Farm
EWI11070	Snarlton Farm, Melksham, Wiltshire
EWI11104	New Road Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, Wiltshire
EWI11194	Land at Melksham, Wiltshire

4.37 The HER holds records for eight previous archaeological investigations within the 1km study area (Figure 11, Table 11). These include the archaeological excavations undertaken on land west of Eight Acre Plantation around 700m southeast of the Site, the results of which are discussed above (MWI7670) and also a watching brief undertaken during the installation of a gas pipeline running to the east and north of the Site (MWI3540).

4.38 A large geophysical survey was undertaken of land 450m east and southeast of the Site (EWI111194). The results of the survey are recorded as follows on the HER 'A detailed magnetometer survey conducted over approximately 23.5 hectares at Melksham has identified an area of probable later prehistoric or Romano-British occupation in the form of adjoining enclosures, a trackway and pits. Other tentative trends and discrete anomalies could reflect further areas of activity, whilst two parallel ditches correspond with an undated cropmark and could relate to a track or drove way. The interpretation of an unusual line of at least 8 small rings is unclear. Former ridge and furrow is mapped, along with two former field boundaries, ploughing effects and a series of land drains. Two infilled ponds have been identified, as well as debris associated with a former building. Natural magnetic responses and an underground service are also evident in the results.'

- 4.39** Archaeological works were undertaken during extensions to agricultural buildings at Snarlton Farm 870m southeast of the Site (EWI11070). The HER summarises the results as follows *'The results of the archaeological monitoring and recording did not reveal any archaeologically significant features or deposits within the monitored area. A small collection of finds were recovered from the subsoil during the works. These included residual Roman pottery, as well as a quantity of local Medieval wares. Directly north of the site there is a probable Medieval settlement at Browns Lane. The recovered Medieval pottery was generally in good condition which would help to support the idea of a Medieval settlement close to this location. The Roman material however was heavily abraded and in quite poor condition, which would suggest some movement from its original context. Roman archaeology was identified during an evaluation on fields to the south in 2024. The nearest area of Roman archaeology identified was located approximately 250m to the southwest of the monitored area.'*
- 4.40** A large evaluation using both geophysical survey and trial trenching was carried out on land south of Snarlton Farm (EWI10954) around 800m southeast of the Site. The results are summarised on the HER as follows *'The geophysical survey and the evaluation have indicated the presence of moderately preserved archaeological remains in the north and east parts of the site (Fields 1, 2 and 4). These consisted of multiple ditched enclosures, with potentially associated pits and curvilinear ditches. The recovered artefacts suggested that the enclosures were related to Roman agricultural activity and/or occupation, which potentially spanned the Roman period. A small amount of residual struck flint, as well as some medieval pottery indicated a low potential for prehistoric and post-Roman activity within the site. It should be noted that onsite flooding impeded the investigation of identified features and the recovery of finds in some trenches.'* The results of the evaluation are not recorded on the HER monument records as yet, but clearly indicate additional evidence for Roman activity in the wider area.
- 4.41** Further archaeological evaluations have been undertaken recently around 800m southeast of the Site (EWI11070) at Snarlton Farm. The HER records that *'One undated ditch which is likely to have been an historic field boundary based on historic mapping was revealed during the evaluation. An area of modern disturbance was also noted in the southeast corner of the site.'*

- 4.42** An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land south of Blackmore Farm, around 550m east/southeast of the Site (EWI10611). The HER records that *'One undated ditch which is likely to have been an historic field boundary based on historic mapping was revealed during the evaluation. An area of modern disturbance was also noted in the southeast corner of the site.'*
- 4.43** As part of the present development proposals, a geophysical survey has been undertaken across the application site and the extent of the applicant's ownership by SUMO Services¹⁰. This is recorded as an event record on the Wiltshire HER (EWI10679).
- 4.44** The geophysical survey report concluded that *'The magnetometer survey has identified a linear response which corresponds with the location of a medieval / post-medieval boundary bank recorded in the HER. Several uncertain responses have also been detected during the survey, possibly the result of drainage or agricultural activity on the site, however it is difficult to make a confident interpretation. Ridge and furrow is present across most of the site.'*¹¹ (Figures 12 and 13).
- 4.45** An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken across the Site in early 2025 by Cotswold Archaeology¹² (Figure 14; EWI11104). The conclusions of the evaluation were laid out as follows: *'Though the geophysical survey of the site identified several possible archaeological anomalies these did not correspond to any archaeological features. A single, shallow, undated pit of possible archaeological origin was identified, however this did not correspond to a geophysical anomaly.*
- 'Trench 2 (see Figure 14) contained a modern feature located toward the southern extent of the trench. This feature was not visible on the geophysical survey and measured over 5m in length. This features corresponds with a previous field boundary visible in the 1886 Ordnance Survey map and is visible in all maps up until the 1961 Ordnance Survey map. In aerial photography from 1947 the boundary is visible as a hedge line with associated trees. The materials recovered*

¹⁰ SUMO 2024

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Cotswold Archaeology 2025

were not retained, and comprised of modern glass and barbed wire fragments and are likely evidence of the removal of this boundary and its backfill.

'Trenches 73 and 68 were targeted to investigate the possible medieval bank recorded in the HER, however no obvious evidence of its presence was identified.

'No evidence of the possible medieval ridge and furrow identified on the geophysical survey was encountered. However it is possible that due to the shallow nature of the topsoil, what appeared to be possible ridge and furrow, is actually the result of plough scaring, which was noted during the evaluation.

'Trenches 36, 37, 48, 53, 63, 65, 67 and 69 (see Figure 14) also targeted geophysical anomalies however they did not correspond to any archaeological features. It is also interesting to note that where obvious modern features were encountered they do not appear to correspond with any geophysical anomaly.

*'There is a tendency for the local farms to the north-east of Melksham to become heavily water-logged, flood and have significant areas of standing water throughout the winter and early spring, which may explain why there is the presence of intermittent subsoil across the site, and only a shallow topsoil. It may also explain why the geophysical results are inconsistent. Most of the farms in the area, at least in recent memory have focussed on maintaining dairy herds due to the poor nature of the soils.'*¹³

4.46 LiDAR data has been downloaded and interrogated for the site, using QGIS software (Figure 15). The results of the lidar survey correspond very closely with the geophysical survey, confirming that the very slight remains of ridge and furrow are still present across the entire Site. The remnants of the former field boundaries shown on the Tithe map and early OS maps are also present. A few linear features, suggesting ditches also run through the site in places, although whether these are modern tracks or indicate earlier features is uncertain.

Historic Landscape Character

4.47 The Wiltshire County Council Historic Landscape Character (Figure 16) records the majority of the Site on the western side as being located in an unnamed area

¹³ Cotswold Archaeology 2025

(MWI4917). It is described as *'These mainly regular fields have changed little since the 1 ed 6" OS map. They probably represent an episode of planned enclosure, with irregularities the result of topography. No previous character can be identified in this area from the sources.'* The general character area is stated as being 'Fields and Enclosed Lands'. The record description also notes that *'Fields exist in an area named as Melksham Forest, but no woodland can be seen in the vicinity on any of the sources'*.

- 4.48** The eastern edge of the site lies within a 'Blackmore Forest' (MWI4924), described as *'These very regular fields appear unchanged from the 1 ed 6" OS map and appear to have been set out by the 1814 Enclosure Act. Previously the land was part of an area of rough grassland/heath marked as Blackmore Forest on the 1 ed 1" OS map.'* And fall under the Broad Type of 'Unimproved Land'. The record description continues that *'This land parcel is shown as being subject to Parliamentary Enclosure Act (1814), on the Enclosure Award mapping. The enclosed land shown on the 1 ed 6" OS map appears to be the result of this process. Placename on the 1 ed 1" OS suggests woodland but there is no evidence for such character on any of the available sources. This land includes New Road Farm, which is of modern origin. However, the farm is too small to be mapped as a separate character area so has been included here.'*
- 4.49** The above landscape descriptions concur with the information assessed within this report.

5. Impact Assessment

Proposed Development

5.1 The outline application for the Site proposes: *"residential development; public open space including formal play space and allotments; sustainable drainage systems and associated infrastructure; a 100 place nursery and access points for pedestrians and cyclists. All matters are reserved except for access, the principal point of access is to be provided from a new northern arm onto an improved arrangement of the Eastern Way/A3102 roundabout junction and an emergency access onto the A3102"* (Figure 17).

5.2 The proposed development will include:

- a) include a variety of energy efficient housing types and tenures;
- b) a 100 place nursery;
- c) propose a landscape structure that builds on, and enhances existing assets, providing extensive green infrastructure within the development, including food growing opportunities, formal play provision and a sustainable drainage system;
- d) provide an appropriate net gain for biodiversity;
- e) allow for pedestrian, cycle and public transport networks to be integrated within the scheme, in a manner that provides easy access to the services, facilities and employment opportunities that will come forward as part of the development (the nursery and public open space provision) and exist within the wider environs; and
- f) provide for necessary supporting infrastructure.

Factors Affecting Archaeological Survival

5.3 Archaeological remains can survive as earthworks and as below ground archaeological features, finds and layers. Part of the assessment process is to consider what factors may have affected archaeological survival. That is to say, what conditions would have enhanced the chances of survival and what conditions would have reduced the chances of survival.

5.4 The subject of archaeological preservation has been covered comprehensively elsewhere¹⁴, and it is a subject which is subject to ongoing review as our understanding grows. The following addresses some familiar scenarios for assessment reports such as this, to allow the reader an insight into some 'typical' scenarios.

5.5 In rural locations, below ground remains are likely to be sealed by a relatively thin series of layers. Typically a topsoil of c.100-200mm and a subsoil of 100-300mm. Therefore, they may be sealed by 200-500mm of deposits. Earthworks are most common in areas not subject to modern, mechanised ploughing, although earthworks can be preserved in hedgerows, wooded areas and even as plough-reduced remnants within arable fields.

5.6 This Site has been subject to previous agricultural practices from the medieval period, with former ridge and furrow having been present across the entire area. Such works will have truncated any underlying archaeological remains that may have been present, but it is unlikely to have completely removed any earlier archaeology, if present.

Impacts from the development

5.7 The development proposals will likely require the following tasks, all of which would involve groundworks that could expose, damage or destroy any underlying archaeological remains:

- Site preparation works, including set up of contractors compounds or materials set down areas;
- Construction of access roads around the site area;
- Topsoil stripping;
- Landscaping works;
- Excavation of footings or services.

5.8 The bank running east to west across the southern part of the Site (MWI73984) is of medieval date and it is likely to need to be partially removed as part of the development proposals, due to its location close to Sandridge Common road, and where the main accesses into the site area will be. The feature is likely to be

¹⁴ Historic England 2016. Preserving Archaeological Remains. Decision-taking for Sites under Development

associated with agricultural practices, but could be associated with land boundaries. It would be considered of local (low) to regional (moderate) archaeological importance.

5.9 The trial trench evaluation¹⁵ identified a number of modern features which would be considered of low archaeological importance, as well as a single undated pit. The archaeological importance of the pit is considered to be low based on it being an isolated feature with no dating evidence.

5.10 The archaeological works undertaken to the east and southeast of the Site at Blackmore Farm and Snarlton Farm have recorded evidence indicating Romano-British activity within the area. The evaluation carried out by Cotswold Archaeology within the Site did not indicate that any such activity extended into the Site area.

¹⁵ Cotswold Archaeology 2025

6. Conclusions

6.1 An outline planning application is being put forward by Bloor Homes for “*residential development; public open space including formal play space and allotments; sustainable drainage systems and associated infrastructure; a 100 place nursery and access points for pedestrians and cyclists. All matters are reserved except for access, the principal point of access is to be provided from a new northern arm onto an improved arrangement of the Eastern Way/A3102 roundabout junction and an emergency access onto the A3102*”.

6.2 Based on the information contained within the Wiltshire HER, supplemented by historic mapping and documentary research, the Site does not contain any designated archaeological assets, where there would be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation *in situ* and against development. The Site has already been subject to some truncation through former agricultural processes (including medieval/post medieval ridge and furrow). This will have caused some truncation of any archaeological deposits that may have been present on the site, but the extent of such truncation is likely to be limited and earlier underlying remains may survive, although none were indicated by the geophysical survey or trial trench evaluation carried out at the Site.

6.3 The following table details the archaeological potential ascribed to the Site by period and an assessment of the likely archaeological importance of any remains of those periods should they survive which was based on the assessment work undertaken in advance of the evaluations.

Table 12: Assessed Archaeological Potential and Importance by period

Period	Archaeological Potential	Archaeological Importance
Early Prehistoric: Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic	Low – due to the lack of any records in the 1km study area. Any archaeology may be present in the form of stray finds.	Low (local) – stray finds
Late Prehistoric: Bronze Age and Iron Age	Low to moderate based on previous archaeological records of Bronze Age date in the area Very low for Iron Age remains	Low (local) – remains of later prehistoric field boundaries and agricultural features; Regional (moderate) – if remains of round barrows or settlement were present

Roman	Moderate potential based on the recorded evidence of settlements to the northwest and southeast of the Site	Local (low) assuming related to dispersed agricultural land use or stray finds, Local (low) to regional (moderate) if remains of settlement are present
Early Medieval	Low – the Site likely lay in agricultural land surrounding the pre-Norman conquest settlement.	Local (low) associated with agricultural activity
Medieval	High – the Site lies in agricultural land surrounding Melksham and buried remains of boundaries and ridge and furrow survive	Local (low) associated with agricultural activity
Post Medieval	High – the Site lies in agricultural land surrounding Melksham and buried remains of boundaries and ridge and furrow survive	Local (low) associated with agriculture and the farm
Modern	Negligible for significant archaeological remains to be present	Negligible

6.4 Assessment of HER data and cartographic analysis has shown that the Site was undeveloped land since at least the medieval period. Ridge and furrow has been confirmed within the Site area from aerial photographic evidence as recorded on the HER, as well as more recent geophysical survey and Lidar analysis. This may be of medieval or post medieval date. An earthwork bank runs across the southern part of the Site running parallel with Sandridge Common Road. This may be of medieval date and probably of low archaeological importance, associated with agricultural activity. The feature would likely be partially removed as part of the development proposals to allow access into the residential area. The removal could be effectively achieved through the implementation of appropriate archaeological mitigation. The alignment of the bank will still be visible across the southern part of the development area, and could be projected between those areas where access will be created through it.

6.5 The results of the geophysical survey undertaken across the site in January 2024 by Sumo Services identified a possible medieval or post medieval boundary bank and medieval ridge and furrow across the area. It also identified a number of possible archaeological anomalies of uncertain origin. Most other features identified were considered likely to be the results of post medieval or later drainage or other agricultural activity.

- 6.6** In March 2025 the site was subject to trial trench evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology which targeted both anomalies identified by the geophysical survey and areas where no anomalies, excluding ridge and furrow, were visible. The trenching failed to identify the geophysical survey anomalies of possible archaeological origin. It did identify a single undated pit of archaeological origin and a number of modern features. Nothing of archaeological significance was identified.
- 6.7** Following evaluation, there is considered to be a very low potential for any significant archaeology of any period to be present within the Site.
- 6.8** On the basis of available evidence, it is considered that the proposed development accords with current legislation, the planning policies contained within the NPPF and local policies. The Site has been subject to desk-based assessment and the archaeological potentials and importance have been assessed. The proposals do not impact on any designated archaeological sites. Evaluation of the Site through geophysical survey and archaeological trial trench has not indicated the presence of any hitherto unidentified archaeological remains of significance.
- 6.9** The scope of any further archaeological works that would be needed in advance or during development of the Site would need to be confirmed with the archaeological officer of Wiltshire County Council in their capacity as the nominated archaeological advisor to the LPA. Based on the lack of significant archaeology being identified through evaluation, it is considered unlikely that any further archaeological mitigation would be required at the site.

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