

Proposed Solar PV Development

Preliminary Environmental Information Report Appendix 8.5 Outline Archaeological Strategy - Written Scheme of Investigation

Byers Gill Solar

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Outline Archaeological Strategy - Written Scheme of Investigation

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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 Project	1
	1.2 Scope of document.....	1
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	2
	2.1 Introduction.....	2
	REFERENCES	7



Byers Gill Solar

Outline Archaeological Strategy: Written Scheme of Investigation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Arup (the client), on behalf of JBM Solar Ltd. to prepare an Outline Archaeological Strategy for the Byers Gill Solar Farm, Fordingbridge, Dorset (hereafter 'the Site') centred on NGR SU 12018 11797.
- 1.1.2 The Proposed Development consists of a solar farm capable of generating over 50MW Alternating Current (AC) of electricity with co-located Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), located between Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees in north-east England. The Site Area is approximately 563ha and comprises six solar photovoltaic (PV) panel areas (Panel Areas A-F). The solar PV panels would be mounted on a metal frame in groups. The solar PV panels will either be fixed in position or will track the sun throughout the day; this aspect of the Proposed Development remains under consideration by the Applicant and may be confirmed prior to submission of a DCO application. An on-site substation would be located within Panel Area C.
- 1.1.3 This document will be submitted as a Technical Appendix (8.5) with the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) for the Site as part of larger suite of documents.

1.2 Scope of document

- 1.2.1 This document sets out an overarching strategy that will specify the principles of a phased approach to a programme of archaeological investigation and recording post outline planning consent.
- 1.2.2 It is intended that each development phase will be carried out in accordance with a separate, detailed Written Scheme of Investigation, and the results of each phase will be used to inform the subsequent phases, in terms of scope and methodology as appropriate. These specific WSIs may relate to specific locations or to a specific mitigation strategy.
- 1.2.3 This strategy will be submitted to the County Archaeologist for Durham County Council and Hartlepool Borough Council, archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), for comment and consultation prior to submission and will be directly referenced, as required, in any planning conditions attached to a positive determination for the outline application.

1.3 Construction programme

- 1.3.1 The construction programme has not yet been confirmed but will depend on the final project design and the construction strategy. Following consent being granted for Development Consent Order, timescales to undertake the archaeological works, and any potential mitigation ahead of construction, will be confirmed and agreed. At the time of writing, a phased approach to the development of the Site is proposed. Each phase of archaeological



evaluation work will be completed within an appropriate and agreed timescale as per any detailed condition.

- 1.3.2 An updated version of this document will be issued should the current working programme of construction phases change.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background was assessed in a prior desk-based assessment (DBA: Wessex Archaeology 2023) which considered the recorded historic environment resource within a 2 km study area of the proposed development area. A geophysical survey is currently being undertaken across the Site while some intrusive trial trench evaluation will also be carried out.

2.1.2 A summary of the results will be presented below for submission with the Environmental Statement.

3 STRATEGY OVERVIEW

3.1 General

3.1.1 The proposed development will involve groundworks initially comprising the removal of topsoil and subsoil from all areas where house-building and related infrastructure is proposed. The stripping of sub-soils for infrastructure works, and the excavation of foundations and service trenches may result in the truncation and destruction of any archaeologically significant buried features or deposits present within the footprint of the working areas.

3.1.2 Potential impacts to archaeologically significant remains can be addressed via the principles of:

- *Preservation in situ – removing any risk of impact through design changes and / or the implementation of an effective strategy and procedure for their protection and management prior to, during and post-construction; or*
- *Preservation by record – mitigation of impact through the application of a range of archaeological techniques prior to and during construction.*

3.1.3 This Outline Strategy forms part of an ongoing process to identify the components of the archaeological resource that will be affected by the proposed development and their significance, and to propose either to mitigate or to safeguard against any impact that may occur due to its implementation in line with national and local planning policy.

3.1.4 The overall strategy will evolve as future stages of archaeological work are carried out, the results of which will inform the requirement for and scope of any subsequent work. This Outline Strategy sets out the scope and nature of the archaeological programme and how each phase of archaeological works will be accommodated at each phase of development.

3.2 Archaeological programme

3.2.1 The initial aim of the programme of investigations is not to mitigate, but to more accurately establish the potential for the presence/absence of archaeologically significant remains, allowing a detailed and site-specific mitigation programme to be created, and thus to be undertaken prior to the submission of detailed plans.



- 3.2.2 It is anticipated that the trial trench scheme of investigations will be continued following determination with each phase of archaeological works will be carried out well in advance of construction to allow sufficient time to plan and undertake any subsequent mitigation works that may be required.
- 3.2.3 Three potential outcomes can be predicted, following each phase of the scheme of investigations:
- *No further work will be required – the County Archaeologist for Dorset County Council is satisfied that no significant archaeological remains meriting subsequent mitigation or preservation in situ are identified;*
 - *Additional mitigation is required by the County Archaeologist for Dorset County Council – significant archaeological remains requiring preservation by record are identified; or*
 - *Preservation in situ is proposed – significant archaeological remains are identified that merit preservation in situ, to be achieved by detailed design to accommodate the archaeological remains to avoid any harm.*
- 3.2.4 Following the completion of each phase of the investigations, consultation will be undertaken with the LPA to agree the need for and scope of any works that will be required to mitigate the impacts of the development on the archaeological resource.
- 3.2.5 Any decisions regarding preservation *in situ* of archaeological remains identified during the evaluations will be made via consultation between the Client or their representatives and the County Archaeology for Durham County Council and Hartlepool Borough Council.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 General aims

- 4.1.1 The general aims of the archaeological evaluation, in compliance with the ClfA' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), are:
- *to provide information about the archaeological potential of the site;*
 - *to inform detailed design in order to mitigate against any potential harm, should this be deemed necessary; and*
 - *to inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.*

4.2 General objectives

- 4.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the archaeological evaluation are:
- *to determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;*
 - *to establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;*
 - *to test the results of the geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2018);*
 - *to place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and*



- *to make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.*

4.3 Specific objectives

4.3.1 Based on the known archaeological resource within the Site, identified within the DBA, and geophysical survey, the archaeological investigations will be undertaken with a view to contributing to relevant research objectives as set out below (N.B. further research questions may be added to the specific WSIs where these are identified following further archaeological works):

5 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATION

5.1 Schedule

5.1.1 Following the submission of an agreed WSI for each phase of construction archaeological evaluation:

- *the works must be completed and reported on in time to inform the final scheme design and archaeological mitigation strategy for each phase of the development;*
- *each phase of the evaluation works will be subject to a reporting process and results fed back into the subsequent evaluation and mitigation strategies to allow for changes in methodologies/sampling strategies etc., for forthcoming works to be set out;*
- *a final schedule for the phased evaluation will be developed following consent of the outline application and production of a construction programme, once known; and*
- *each phase of archaeological evaluation work will be completed as per any detailed condition of consent.*

5.2 The Client

5.2.1 JBM Solar will remain the overarching stakeholder throughout the development process and will ensure that this Outline Strategy is embedded within the Construction Management Plan (CMP) for the proposed development. Any Developer, Contractor or Sub-contractor undertaking work within the Site will be made aware of the archaeological requirements as set out within this Outline Strategy, in accordance with the wording of the relevant planning conditions.

5.3 Archaeological Curator(s)

5.3.1 The Archaeological Curator for the Site is as follows:

- *County Archaeologist for Durham County Council; and*
- *County Archaeologist for Hartlepool Borough Council.*

5.3.2 During the project, communication with the Archaeological Curator(s) will be undertaken via email and/ or telephone contact. Specific WSIs for each phase of the archaeological works will be submitted to the Archaeological Curator(s) for comment/ approval. During any fieldwork, the Archaeological Curator(s) will be afforded site monitoring visits as required. After construction has been completed, the final archaeological report(s) or publication(s) for this project will be submitted to the Archaeological Curator(s).



5.4 Archaeological Contractor(s)

5.4.1 Archaeological Contractor(s) will be appointed to carry out specific packages of work. The Archaeological Contractor(s) may be appointed by the Developer or their appointed representatives (the Client, or other contractors/ sub-contractors). In these instances, the Client will have a coordinating role, ensuring works are specified, planned, undertaken and reported in accordance with this Outline Strategy, and undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced personnel.

5.5 Responsibilities

5.5.1 The responsibility for implementing the Outline Strategy, programme and subsequent agreed WSIs related to each phase of development rest with the Developer and their appointed representatives (including their Contractors).

5.5.2 The Developer and / or their appointed representatives, or any archaeological body they may appoint to manage the implementation of the Outline Strategy, will seek curatorial advice from the Archaeological Curator(s) as appropriate.

5.5.3 Interaction with the Archaeological Curator(s) will be administered by the Developer and/ or their appointed representatives. Should newly identified archaeological deposits be discovered during construction, the Archaeological Curator(s) will be contacted immediately.

5.5.4 The Developer and/ or their appointed representatives will ensure that Contractors make project personnel aware of this Outline Strategy programme and subsequent agreed WSIs related to each phase of development.

6 STRATEGY

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 In line with the information gathered during the DBA and the data collected during the geophysical survey, the following strategy is proposed. This strategy will be updated prior to submission of the ES

6.2 Pre-construction

6.2.1 Where geophysical survey has been undertaken and not sampled during the application process, trial trenches will excavated determine the veracity of the results, with a sample of trenches placed in 'blank' areas to identify any other potential archaeological remains not previously identified.

6.2.2 This would comprise the excavation of evaluation trenches, each measuring 50 x 2 m. The final number and specific locations of the trenches would be determined in consultation with the Archaeological Curator(s) and set out within the relevant specific WSI.

6.2.3 The results of each phase of the evaluation will inform the requirement for subsequent stages of mitigation within discrete areas of the Site.

6.2.4 This may take the form of area excavation (e.g. strip, map and sample) to deliver preservation by record by way of mitigation for the loss, be it partial or total, of any identified archaeological remains deemed to be of sufficient significance.

6.2.5 Any such works will also take place prior to construction.



6.3 During construction

- 6.3.1 No further works are anticipated to be required within the evaluation areas during the construction phase, excepting where a programme of archaeological monitoring of groundworks (via watching brief) is required to be undertaken as mitigation.
- 6.3.2 Should any archaeological remains identified during the trial trench evaluations be proposed for preservation *in situ*, a strategy for the protection of the remains during construction will be required.

6.4 Post-construction

- 6.4.1 In general, no further archaeological works are anticipated to be required within evaluation areas post-construction, following the implementation of any required programme of mitigation.
- 6.4.2 The only exception to this would be where archaeological remains identified during the evaluation are proposed to be preserved *in situ*, in which case, a strategy for the long-term management of the remains will be required.

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