

Greyhone Wood, Highmoor, Oxon

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. The first 4 sections of this brief deal specifically with this particular case. 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 Following the identification of a surviving enclosure within a working wood the Forestry Commission have agreed to allow an intervention, in the form of a single slot, to be excavated across the enclosure ditch in order to characterise its nature and extent and attempt to recover dating evidence. This brief sets out the requirements for this intervention.

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 enclosure is located within Greyhone Wood to the north of Kingwood common and south of Highmoor Cross (SU 6962 8350). The earthworked enclosure lies at approximately 133m OD and the underlying geology is shown as Clay with Flints but the site is located near the edge of the Chalk. The site is currently within a working managed wood.

2.2 Project Background

2.2.1 The enclosure has been identified within existing woodland which is managed by the Forestry Commission. Harvesting and planting operations could have a negative impact on this enclosure. Concerns have been raised over possible damage to the enclosure caused by vehicle movements and measures have been discussed to reduce this possibility during an onsite meeting in 2011. In order to be able to fully assess the significance of the feature it has been agreed that a single intervention will be hand excavated across the enclosure ditch in order to characterise the nature and extent of the feature and to attempt to recover dating evidence.

2.3 Archaeological Background

- 2.3.1 The enclosure is located in an area where very few formal archaeological investigations have been undertaken and therefore the archaeological background of the general area is not fully understood.
- 2.3.2 The enclosure itself is approximately 120m long by 90m wide and forms an irregular enclosure. The SE corner of the bank has been truncated by a trackway, shown on the first edition OS map which appears to have been used recently as an access for forestry vehicles. The western side of the enclosure may have been truncated by a second trackway shown on the first edition OS map.

3. **REQUIREMENT FOR WORK:**

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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 The investigation will consist of a 2m wide slot, hand excavated across the ditch. The slot should be located along a fairly undisturbed section of the ditch in order to obtain a fair assessment of its profile. The excavation should be undertaken in accordance with the IFA guidance for archaeological excavation.
- 4.2 The excavation should record each separate layer within the ditch as a separate context.
- Descriptions of individual deposits and features will be recorded on pro-forma context recording sheets.
 - All archaeological deposits exposed will be planned at a scale of 1:20 and sections drawn at a scale of 1:10. All site drawings will be by pencil on drafting film.
 - Heights above OD will be taken and recorded on plans and sections.
 - The locations of the intervention and of all plans and sections will be tied into the National Grid.
 - A full photographic record will be made of the watching brief project, consisting of digital image, colour print, and b/w print (contact sheet) should archaeological

deposits be encountered. It will record the principal features and finds discovered, both in detail and in their general context.

4.3 In general, all finds and artefacts will be retained, though all but a sample of some classes of building material will be discarded after recording. The categories of artefacts to be discarded will be discussed with the Forestry commission's archaeologist and County Archaeological Officer.

4.4 Provision shall be made for environmental sampling where appropriate.

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17th February 2012