



Historic England

Ms Emily Catcheside
Oxfordshire County Council

Direct Dial: 0207 973 3644

Our ref: P01446145
21 May 2023

Dear Ms Catcheside,

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**A LINEAR SITE COMPRISING A CORRIDOR BETWEEN THE A34 MILTON
INTERCHANGE AND THE B4015 NORTH OF CLIFTON HAMPDEN
Application No. R3.0138/21**

Thank you for your letter of April 2023 regarding further information on the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

The new Thames crossing and the new road will be near to the scheduled monument known as Settlement Site North of Thames (HA1006345, A117 in the Environmental Statement (ES)).

This monument consists of the archaeological remains of enclosures, pits and trackways which are known from aerial photographs. Most of the enclosures are rectangular but there are a few circular or penannular features which could indicate roundhouses. The form of the cropmarks, particularly on the east side of the complex, suggests the remains are of probable prehistoric and Roman date, and not prehistoric as described in the ES (7.10.12; Appendix 7.1 Gazetteer, no A117).

The significance of the scheduled monument lies in its evidential value and is also contributed to by its setting (the surroundings in which it is experienced). The evidential value is the potential of the archaeological remains to contribute to our understanding of how people lived and worked the land in this area, including how this changed through time up to the Roman period. The setting contributes in that the relationship of the river to the monument can be understood, and in the rural / agricultural land to the west and north which illustrates the original rural surroundings of the prehistoric and Roman features. To the east the setting is compromised by the railway embankment and bridge. There are modern quarries to the south of the river.



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The new road will run approximately 250 m west of the scheduled monument, with the new Thames crossing to the south-west. It will not change the evidential value of the monument.

The monument would be affected by light pollution, noise (near constant as opposed to intermittent railway noise that exists at present) from the road, visibility of the road / bridge and infrastructure. It will mean that the site feels enclosed on two sides by modern features - the impact is cumulative to that of the railway line. The ES assesses the impact magnitude as minor adverse on an asset of high significance. The significance of the effect on the monument is assessed as slight, permanent and 'not significant'. Using Table 7.4 in the ES the significance of effect could be either slight or moderate.

I advise that the change to the setting is such that the significance of effect is moderate, and not slight. This is less than substantial harm as in the NPPF Para. 202, but a higher level of that harm. The lower assessment in the ES may have arisen from the mistaken understanding that there was already modern development west of the monument. We pointed out this error in previous advice but it is repeated in the latest version of the Environmental Statement (7.10.19).

Figure 7.21 in the ES is titled Areas of Archaeological Potential. While it actually seems to show areas that have been surveyed or evaluated rather than actual potential, it is nonetheless misleading in not showing the scheduled monuments. This means that areas close to the red line boundary appear blank, when in fact they contain archaeology of national significance. This figure should be revised and resubmitted.

For undesignated archaeological remains we defer to the advice of the Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Service.

For all other matters we refer to our previous advice letter dated 9/12/21.

Policy

Paras 194, 195, 197, 199, 200, 202 and 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) are relevant. Paras. 199 (give great weight to conservation of designated assets regardless of level of harm) and 200 (any harm to a designated asset must have clear and convincing justification) are particularly important, as is the requirement to balance harm against public benefit (Para. 202)

Recommendation

Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds but would advise that the points raised above are addressed prior to determination of the planning application.



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Recommendation

Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decision in due course.

Yours sincerely,

David Wilkinson

David Wilkinson

Inspector of Ancient Monuments

E-mail: david.wilkinson@HistoricEngland.org.uk

cc: Richard Oram, Archaeology Team Leader, Oxfordshire County Council



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