

LAKES 103 AND 104, COTSWOLD WATER PARK FAIRFORD – MILESTONE COTTAGE SITE

Archaeology Briefing Note

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document relates specifically to the Milestone House site, but should be considered to represent an addendum to the Environmental Statement to be submitted for the wider Lake 104, 103 and 103A site. It has been produced by Waterman Energy, Environment and Design (Waterman), on behalf of Cygnet Investments.
- 1.2 This addendum has been prepared in accordance with Policies 12 and 13 of the Cotswold District Local Plan, which was adopted in April 2006. It accords with national guidance in the form of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (DoE 1994) and PPG 16 'Archaeology and Planning' (DoE 1990) and is in line with English Heritage and Institute for Archaeologists guidance. Waterman is a Registered Organisation with this latter body.
- 1.3 The preparation of this document has involved an examination of the archaeological information relating to the area contained within the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (GSMR). This information has been supplemented through consultation of the historic maps and secondary sources held at the Gloucestershire Record Office and of aerial photographs held at the National Monuments Record (NMR) in order to predict and extrapolate likely archaeological conditions within the site. As regards the Milestone House site, this document forms the basis for any further investigative work, such as field evaluation, that may be deemed necessary.

2.0 Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The Victoria County History (1981) notes that a 'cluster of Iron Age and Romano-British sites have been identified on the gravels in the south-eastern corner of the parish' (Lewis 1982), and the GSMR records that an assemblage of Iron Age pottery, consisting of 112 sherds from five or six pots, was recovered immediately to the south-east of the Milestone House site in 1964 (GSMR 2484).
- 2.2 The 1770 Enclosure map of the Parish of Fairford shows the Milestone House site on the southern edge of the turnpike road, and containing part of a trackway running west to east through its southern portion. The site is recorded as being in arable production by the Tithe Map of 1841, with this likely to have been the case since at least the medieval period, and the trackway is still evident on this map. The Tithe map labels two fields at the eastern end of this track as 'Street Way' or 'Streetway', and the presence of the prefix 'street' has been interpreted as referring to a paved road of medieval, or earlier, origin (English Place Name Society 1965). Milestone House is shown for the first time on the Ordnance Survey (OS) first edition map of 1896.
- 2.3 Examination of post-war aerial photographs, during preparation of the desk based assessment for the main site, failed to identify any obvious crop-marks within the Milestone House site. The 1952 OS map shows that large-scale gravel extraction had commenced on the eastern edge of the site by that time.

3.0 Archaeological Evaluation and Potential

- 3.1 In 1993, the eastern and south-western parts of the site were the subject of evaluation trenching, undertaken by what was then Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU), in advance of the excavation of the three extant pools in this part of the site (GSMR 20239). This work identified a series of linear features and small pits, and what appeared to be a metallised trackway aligned east to west and apparently relating to the trackway shown on maps of 19th century and earlier date. However, subsequent trenching to confirm the nature of this feature revealed it to be of natural origin. The features failed to yield any dateable material, but the evaluation recorded a buried plough zone overlying the features and that they had been truncated by medieval ridge and furrow.
- 3.2 The OAU excavation recorded the top of the natural gravel at 0.4m depth, and the excavation of the pools in the eastern part of the site will therefore have completely removed all archaeological deposits within their footprints. This will also be the case within the footprint of Milestone House itself.
- 3.3 An evaluation conducted in the main site by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service (GCCAS) in 2004 revealed pits and linears in Trenches 12, 13 and 14, immediately to the west of the Milestone House site. The trenching demonstrated that this area, nearest to the A417, had been subject to some truncation, although this was not as severe as elsewhere in the site, and the absence of associated artefacts was such that these features remain undated. The features were assessed as of no more than local importance by the 2005 ES for the site and their unmitigated loss would therefore represent an impact of no more than minor adverse significance.
- 3.4 On the basis of the above, Cotswold District Council has registered the opinion that archaeology and cultural heritage can be scoped out of the ES for the Proposed Development.
- 3.5 Given the presence of archaeological features in evaluation trenches excavated in the surrounding area, it would seem likely that similar deposits exist in that part of the site that has not yet been subject to evaluation. However, it is likely that these have been truncated by subsequent agricultural activity, gravel extraction and construction activity, and any deposits within this area are therefore unlikely to rate as of any higher than local significance. This being the case, archaeological investigation would be sufficient to mitigate their destruction through the Proposed Development. Moreover, in view of the amount of work already conducted in the area and the relatively high degree of confidence with which the nature of any deposits in the remainder of the Milestone House site can be predicted, the archaeological advisor to Cotswold District Council has agreed that any further archaeological work in this area can be conducted as a condition of planning permission.

4.0 Other Cultural Heritage

- 4.1 The listed buildings identified within the study area adopted for the desk based assessment of the main site are also the closest designated buildings to the Milestone House site. It was the conclusion of the desk based assessment that the development of the main site would have no significant impact on the settings of these buildings, and therefore a negligible impact on built heritage resources. More remote from these listed buildings, the development of the Milestone House area will also have no significant effect on built heritage.