

From: Archaeology Team
Sent: 08 February 2022 11:27
To: Strategic Planning
Cc: Bond, Peter
Subject: RE: Planning Consultation – EA112 – Hamble Airfield

Dear Mr Bond,

Planning Consultation – EA112 – Mineral Extraction Hamble Airfield

Thank you for your consultation. I would draw your attention to Chapter 11 of the Environmental Impact Assessment, supported by Appendix 5.1 the archaeological desk based assessment, which I can largely although not fully endorse to you. There are three issues arising I would particularly draw to your attention.

The potential for Palaeolithic remains

Whilst much archaeology will exist associated with the present land surface some evidence from a deeper archaeology can be associated with the gravel deposits themselves. This period is known as the Palaeolithic (the old stone age). Paragraph 3.2.2 of the desk based assessments indicates that Lower Palaeolithic hand axes have been found from within the vicinity of the airfield. However paragraph 3.3.6 and 4.1.8 indicate that there are no Palaeolithic records in the vicinity. In any event I would argue that given the nature of the proposal the Palaeolithic archaeological potential of these gravel deposits should have been discussed in their own right. A brief review of the archaeological potential of these gravel deposits by Winchester University indicates that they have a moderate potential for derived material. However this potential deserves a more careful review and may or may not identify research agendas associated with gravel extraction of this deposit.

General Archaeological Potential

Paragraph 4.1.1 of the archaeological desk based assessment indicates that the site has a moderate archaeological potential, this is in addition to the known kiln activity on site. That is there is the potential to encounter archaeological remains which are as yet unrecorded during development. I would concur. I note the discussion about existing archaeological data in the vicinity (Para 4.1.8 to 4.1.13) but I would also place more emphasis that the absence of archaeological records in the vicinity may reflect the absence of prior archaeological survey ahead of development in this vicinity. Particularly I note the proximity of the Hamble estuary as a factor raising the archaeological potential generally. I was pleased to note in Chapter 11 tables 11.8 and 11.9 which set out a proposed mitigation strategy which is also set out in paragraphs 11.9.2, 11.9.3 and 11.9.4. It is proposed that in light of the archaeological potential of the site (but in general absence of known archaeological remains other than the kilns site shown on early mapping) that the archaeological impact be mitigated by carrying out initial archaeological survey and further archaeological mitigation by excavation and recording in light of those survey results. Such an approach to create a 'full and proper record' and to be secured by appropriately worded archaeological condition attached to any planning permission issued. The details of the mitigation would be set out and agreed in a written scheme of investigation. Notwithstanding my comments about the military buildings below, I would tend to agree with this approach.

Military Buildings

The site was previously a military airfield and is associated with past military built structures. The implication generally of the Environmental Chapter (11) and the desk based assessment is that these structures no longer exist on site. However it is a general implication and is not overtly stated that they have been shown to have been removed. Para 11.2.3 indicates that there were no visible

remains observed during the site visits. I cannot conceive that an aircraft hanger would go unnoticed during a site visit, but pillboxes, air raid shelter and the potential battle HQ might. I would have wished for the assessment to be explicit that the recorded locations of the military structures and their vicinities were visited to establish if they had or had not survived. Whilst I would argue that such remains should not be needlessly or thoughtlessly removed I cannot imagine it likely that a pill box or air raid shelter would merit preservation, unless perhaps it sat close to the margins where it could be preserved as a result. However the Battle HQ does need particular attention. It is recorded as still being in existence in 2014 (para 3.2.7). It is also shown as being in a location marginal to the extraction. I am not a particular expert in Battle HQs but I do understand that they are relatively rare survivors and important aspects of the airfield's defence. Whilst in general I would request that the applicant be invited to supply additional information regarding the current state of the military structures (particularly explicitly stating whether they are present or not) the Battle HQ merits direct discussion, of its survival (which I assume to be the case as it is referred to as in place in 2014), its merits as an historical structure, and its mitigation cogently supported whether that be preserved in the margins of the site or fully recorded prior to loss.

In summary, whilst I would endorse the approach offered in relation to the general archaeological potential of the site, I would request that the applicant provide additional details with regard to the military structures at the site and to the site's Palaeolithic archaeological potential. I would be happy to comment further in the light of that additional information.

Yours sincerely

County Archaeologist

Hampshire County Council
Economy, Transport and Environment Department