Lancaster District Energy Sites (at draft Local Plan stage)

Initial Desktop Archaeological Assessment

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Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Service

1 Carr House Lane, Lancaster LA1 1SW

Lancashire.archaeology@gmail.com
Introduction and Methodology

Lancaster City Council, as part of the evidence base to support the emerging Local Plan, are seeking an archaeological assessment of a number of sites across the Lancaster District, proposed to be allocated for development.

Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Service has been commissioned to extract a relevant data set from the Lancashire Historic Environment Record, held by Lancashire County Council, and to provide an initial archaeological appraisal of each of the proposed development sites in order to identify any nearby archaeological heritage assets and to assess the potential scale of impact. The boundaries of the sites, names, etc. were provided by Lancaster City Council as ArcGIS shapefiles.

For each site the following information has been requested:

- Identification of known heritage assets (designated and non-designated) within the site;
- Outline assessment of the site's potential to retain unknown buried deposits;
- Identification of designated or non-designated heritage assets nominally within 500m or such other distance as may be appropriate taking into account the significance of the asset and the circumstances of the site;
- Overall conclusion to establish whether the site is considered to be of no archaeological significance/ of some archaeological significance/ of high archaeological significance and whether any heritage assets are considered to be of negligible/local/regional/national importance;
- Recommendations for future survey, where it is deemed appropriate.

The assessment has been undertaken utilising existing datasets, archaeological reports, publications, etc. held at the Lancashire Historic Environment Record. No further documentary research has been undertaken nor have further sources of information been sought out. Only where specifically stated has a targetted site visit also been conducted.

Limits of this assessment

This assessment work has been undertaken using professional judgement by Peter Iles, BSc MSc MCIFA. No formal system of scoring has been used to assign potential or significance to the proposed development sites, although experience of such procedures and of providing information and advice on archaeological planning matters in Lancashire has contributed to the conclusions drawn. Statements that follow should therefore be taken as an informed professional opinion, rather than fact.
LPSA: 772 and 773 Heysham Nuclear Power Station and Safeguarded Land

A series of known heritage assets fall within the land parcel, including a prehistoric findspot, three pre-1848 farmstead sites, a series of underground (potentially fuel) storage tanks, and some WWII and post-war military sites. The western part of the site is already heavily developed and includes a significant area of land reclaimed from Morecambe Bay as part of the construction of the adjacent Heysham Harbour. The area to the east of Money Close Lane, currently used as a golf course, has suffered much less deep disturbance, although it has been affected by landscaping of the golf course.

There are no Designated Heritage Assets within 500m, the closest being Penhale Court (Listed Gd II), c.700m to the north within the settlement of Heysham, and the small complex of Gd II Listed Buildings at Middleton Towers, c.750m to the south. None of these sites are likely to be adversely affected by the development of this land parcel.

The site is considered to be of variable archaeological significance, the western part having some limited areas of local significance. The land east of Money Close Lane is of unknown but it potentially retains prehistoric sites of district – county significance.

Individual known sites may benefit from pre-development recording to the west of Money Close Lane, but more detailed archaeological investigation is unlikely to be necessary. Large-scale development on the land east of Money Close Lane will require a programme of field survey and investigation, including geophysical survey and trial trenching. This should be undertaken prior to development decisions being made and used to inform the design of development proposals, with an appropriate report and heritage assessment being submitted with any planning application.

LPSA: 774 Heysham Substation Land

There are no heritage assets recorded within the development area, although it is adjacent to the surviving portion of Heysham Moss and considered to have some potential for prehistoric and palaeoecological remains. The eastern part of the site is crossed by the remains of mid-later C20 railway sidings, associated with the adjacent Trimpell works, which are not of archaeological significance. Recent development includes the construction of a National Grid substation in the centre of the site (without any archaeological investigation) and the construction of an access road on the former railway embankment. Archaeological investigation of the adjacent wind farm substation site eventually revealed a series of natural watercourses, although initial trial trenching had suggested that some elements may have been man-made.

There are no Designated Heritage Assets within 500m of the site, the closest being the Listed Gd II Penhale Court, Heysham, 620m to the northwest, which is unlikely to be impacted significantly by development of this land parcel.

Those areas undisturbed by recent construction work and railway construction are considered to have a significant archaeological potential, of local-county level, for palaeoecological and prehistoric remains.

Any significant development on the undisturbed land is likely to require a programme of field survey and investigation, including geophysical survey and trial trenching. This should be undertaken prior to development decisions being made and used to inform the design of development proposals, with an appropriate report and heritage assessment being submitted with any planning application.