



CLASP

Community Landscape & Archaeology Survey Project

Registered Charity: 1111667

Please reply to D.F. Hayward MBE, The Secretary, Organising Committee, CLASP,
29, Winston Close, Nether Heyford, Northampton NN7 3JX
Phone/ Fax 01327 341597 email: davensal@hywd1.fsnet.co.uk

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Churchfields Proposed Development Archaeological Implications

1. Introduction

CLASP has initially considered in detail the planning application provided by WNDC regarding the Churchfields development. An initial analysis of the application for Monksmoor has also been made to establish any linkage between the two proposed development areas. These areas are co-terminus and there is a probability that archaeology from one would to some extent either be directly linked or at least have an influence on the other.

We have collated all the data from the Churchfields application together with data from other sources or even established from our own work in the area. For ease of presentation this data will be presented by way of an interactive map to show our view on the archaeology in the direct area of the application and that in the area immediately adjacent to it to. This latter detail is important to demonstrate the significance of all the archaeology of this area.

Archaeological investigations performed into the previous Middlemoor development are also being considered to see what effect they have on the overall picture. As we have to locate copies of these reports, comments will be incorporated into a future, finalised paper on the Monksmoor development. Hopefully this will be completed within the next two - three weeks.

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2. Churchfields Application

To our view the standard of the archaeological investigation commissioned by Messrs Croudace is high although no field walking or test pitting appears to have been undertaken on any of the areas containing anomalies located by the geophysical survey or the air photograph analysis within the proposed development area. At this stage therefore no evidence is presented on the quality of any surviving archaeology in the area under threat.

As will be seen from our presentation of all the known facts the work now being undertaken is revealing the full significance of early settlement in the area to the east of the modern town of Daventry. It is our view that this settlement is in fact the forbear of modern Daventry and should be considered in that light. This settlement appears to have its origins in either the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age. At this stage it is not possible to define any earlier activity owing to the need for further fieldwork. There is however some evidence of earlier ephemeral activity within the confines of the Monksmoor proposals.

From the work undertaken in relation to the current application, it is evident that the Romano - British town of Bannaventa evolved from an earlier Iron Age settlement, it had two distinct phases and was much larger than originally thought. We take the view that this evidence is portraying Bannaventa and its environs as more than a site of local/ regional significance. It is definitely of national and possibly of

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international significance. It would appear to us that the projected road corridor and its associated junction with the A5, Watling Street, would seriously threaten the northern 'suburbs' of Bannaventa.

What is also of apparent significance is the physical linkage between northern Bannaventa and the settlement at Thrupp. Whilst the centre of Thrupp is just to the immediate north of the proposed development area there is again a distinct possibility that its unexplored surroundings and connections are under threat. What is of specific interest with this location is the confirmed evidence of continuity of occupation from the Roman-British era into the medieval period. What was the strength and *raison d'être* for its survival when Bannaventa and other sites 'fell by the wayside'? This question needs to be resolved if at all possible.

As mentioned previously the evidence of early settlement from the number of late Bronze and or early Iron Age ring ditches in the area is significant. To establish a full interpretation of their importance they must be investigated with others in the area, specifically those located at Monksmoor. A strategy to understand how this early settlement developed and evolved into later phases needs to be defined; it also needs to be linked to other work being undertaken in the wider area although this is probably outwith the current discussion.

Whilst considering the Romano-British era and its predecessors we now turn to the south-west part of the development with the concentrated activity in the area between the Long Buckby and Norton

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roads. CLASP has already undertaken structured field walking and metal detecting surveys in this area that both corroborate and expand on the work undertaken on behalf of Messrs Croudace. This is obviously a significant location requiring further archaeological investigation. The comments in the Proposal that this is a possible 'northward' extension of the known settlement on the north end of Borough Hill is probably valid but needs definition. It appears that the westward side of this site is constrained by the modern parish boundary between Daventry and Norton. If this were confirmed to be the case then it would indicate that this is possibly an ancient boundary dating to the Romano-British era if not earlier. We understand that this boundary is currently marked by one of few surviving ancient hedgerows in the area.

One area within the proposed Churchfields that to our mind warrants some further investigation is that surrounding the area from Westlands to Thorpe to the north west of the Long Buckby road. The geophysical survey here has revealed part of a possible angular boundary ditch to the south-east of Westlands buildings. It is noted that the name Thorpe that applies to the other buildings, just a short distance to the north-west of Westlands, could indicate a Scandinavian outlying settlement. We consider that some detailed work needs to be undertaken here to interpret this location.

3. The Next Stage

It is important that a timescale for the progression of the three proposals for work at Daventry is clarified as soon as possible. This will then enable work proposals to be defined and prioritised. CLASP

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would hope that in the short to mid term we would be able to become involved with fieldwalking, structured metal detecting and test pitting. Whilst we would not have the capacity to undertake full scale site excavations on a recurring basis we would hope to be able to undertake one such project as a community based excavation in due course. Not only would this enable our existing members to become involved but would also give members of the wider local population to join CLASP and participate in defining their local heritage.

As mentioned in Section 2 of this paper we strongly feel that the importance of Bannaventa needs to be recognised at the appropriate level. There is therefore an urgent need to develop a strategy to do this; undoubtedly this will involve outside experts from English Heritage and possibly elsewhere. CLASP is prepared to help define this strategy with WNDP. Equally similar work needs to be done to recognise the precise context of pre Roman settlement in the area, how this 'fits' with the contemporary activity at Borough Hill and elsewhere in the area. Again CLASP will be prepared to discuss this.

The possibility of further work at Westlands/ Thorp could perhaps be referred back to the developers, Croudace; to commission more detailed investigation in this area.

As alluded to in the previous Section in the discussion on Thrupp we have identified the features of a continuity of settlement at that specific location. There is also evidence of similar continuity at Bannaventa itself and also the area adjacent to Borough Hill in the south-west. CLASP considers that continuity of settlement should be

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properly defined and utilised to help the modern town of Daventry define a real history and origin. Rapid growth towns like Daventry tend to suffer from a lack of early historical identity and therefore perhaps purpose. To be able to demonstrate the earliest roots may well go some way to overcoming this locally, especially with an opportunity for the local population to participate in the research.

Within the Croudace application there is frequent mention of other possible but less well-defined archaeological features across the area surveyed. These will probably require some further investigation either by way of test pits and/ or 'watching briefs' when the locations are eventually developed. Again CLASP is prepared to comment on these if required.

4. Resources

As previously discussed CLASP intends to participate with WNDC to ensure that an unbiased view from a community based group is heard to ensure that the interpretation and appropriate conservation of the local archaeological heritage is achieved. To enable us to do this work we would seek a method of underwriting expenses occurred in direct connection with it. At this stage these costs would be fairly limited to electronic maps and associated licenses from the Ordnance Survey, aerial photographs and printing costs. In the longer term there could be costs for additional geophysical surveying together with those that would be incurred with conserving, identification and archiving of artefacts.

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We have already discussed with WNDC possible way forwards with the establishment of a long-term permanent archive in the Daventry area. Hopefully if this does come to fruition it will be of benefit as a significant learning and research resource for local history, we are keen to pursue this possibility.

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