

Consultation Advice

R/2020/0357/OOM

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES ON SITE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF UP TO 418,000 SQM (GROSS) OF GENERAL INDUSTRY (USE CLASS B2) AND STORAGE OR DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES (USE CLASS B8)

LAND AT SOUTH TEES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION EAST OF SMITHS DOCK ROAD AND WEST OF TEES DOCK ROAD SOUTH BANK

Background

1. The application is supported by an EIA whose cultural heritage chapter appears at chapter M of volume 2. This chapter deals with 'below ground archaeology', built structures of potential heritage significance have been scoped out of chapter M. The chapter is prepared to a high standard, in accordance with professional guidance, by Prospect Archaeology, a reputable archaeological consultancy.
2. The site lies immediately to the north of what was the level of mean high tide in the mid-nineteenth century, consisting of mud flats and marsh. Today the site consists entirely of made up ground, the making-up and tipping here apparently taking place at rapid pace from the mid to late nineteenth century.
3. Chapter H of the EIA 'Ground Conditions and Remediation' notes that the made-up ground on the site is between 1 to 8 metres deep, with the depth of deposition (generally, but not exclusively) deeper towards the south of the site. Beneath the made-up ground are layers including sand and sandy-silts, sometimes containing shell, and some in places a layer of sandy-clay and gravel. The layer is 2 to 7.5 metres thick (H4.30). Borehole data from what are central areas of the site may suggest a break between lacustrine and tidal fat deposits in this location (chapter H4.31).
4. Generally, remediation will rely on capping and construction slabs/hard surfacing. However, piled foundations/other ground improvement works may be required where structures will be sensitive to movement (chapter H4.40).
5. (a) In the mid-nineteenth century the edge of the dry land is delineated by the Middlesbrough and Redcar Railway, with Eston Junction Station (HER 4358) and Lackenby Station (HER 4360) already present (Chapter M4.5). The South Bank Iron Works (HER 5652) was constructed within the southern boundary of the Site prior to 1863, but is said elsewhere in the chapter to have been succeeded by the South Bank Coke Ovens site.

(b) Former jetties and wharves had gone by 1915 when reclamation had extended the dry land to its current boundary. Reclamation walls (HERs 5604 and 6046) are shown north and south along the riverbank from Eston and Clay Lane Wharves. A new Custom House built further northeast along the riverbank. The Riverside Pumping Station was also constructed during this period and two large reservoirs were located within the reclaimed land in the northwest of the Site (Chapter M4.9)

(c) There following may still be present on the site:

- Foundations of South Bank Iron Works boiler house;
- Foundations of the Antonien Works;
- Foundations of the WW1 submarine base; and
- Foundations of the WW2 Heavy Aircraft Battery.

The twentieth century Custom House and Riverside Pumping House are present.

(d) There are no designated heritage assets within the site, and there are no such assets whose settings are likely to be affected by the development proposal.

Assessment

6. (a) It is assumed by chapter M that, during construction, all archaeological remains would be removed “through the site preparation works, demolition and the creation of development platforms”. All of the above identified heritage assets would therefore “be subject to potential effects that would be Moderate - Substantial Adverse and therefore significant in EIA terms” (Chapter M5.2).

(b) Within the development proposals (except for standing structures outside the scope of this advice) there is no potential for preservation *in situ*. Chapter M therefore states that the only mitigation possible is ‘preservation by record’ (chapter M6.1).

(c) For the most part we agree with this part of the assessment. The four structures whose remains may be identified, are not of such significance as would warrant preservation *in situ*. The only exception to this would be remains of blast furnaces from the South Bank Iron works, were they to be present in any form on site; however, the chapter states that this Iron Works is no longer extant in any form (having been built over), albeit it is unclear whether this conclusion is due to site inspection/evaluation, or solely a matter of historical record.

7. (a) Because the site consists of deep made-up ground above former tidal mud flats and marsh (see above) Chapter M states categorically that no prehistoric remains will exist on the site. This is a conclusion that may be a little too sweeping, given the location of the site, at the tidal edge, in an area likely to have been exploited in the prehistoric period.

(b) Rather than the conclusion, it is the paucity of evidence – at least as far as this is set-out within chapter M – for the conclusion that concerns us. The former land surface is undoubtedly sealed at

depth (especially at the southern part of the site), and the site has been heavily developed, but an area at the coast, and one probably subject to late Holocene inundation such as the Tees estuary, could be of archaeological potential if that surface is buried but not destroyed by development. Evidence of prehistoric activity or deposits, would typically be of peat, waterlogged wood, coppiced or worked wood, worked flint, worked animal bone and antler.

(c) Site investigation information (especially borehole data and cores) should be archaeologically inspected, with a view to identifying any layers of prehistoric archaeological interest; and any positive results in that regard should inform where any deep excavations (including piling) carried out as part of construction should be monitored by a palaeo-environmental archaeologist.

Recommendation

8. (a) We agree with the assessment in chapter M of the EIA that it is unlikely that any remains to be destroyed by the proposals will merit preservation *in situ*.

(b) There should be appropriate recording of the foundations of identified heritage assets of local/regional importance, and of 20th century structures.

(c) There should be some attempt to assess deeply buried layers for prehistoric interest, and thereafter the archaeological monitoring of deep excavations in areas where any deposits of prehistoric interest may survive.

9. Should it be considered that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm to the heritage assets in this case we suggest the following archaeological condition be attached to any planning permission granted for the development.

- (a) *No development shall take place until a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for archaeological work has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The WSI shall as a minimum make provision for:*
- *Before site remediation or development commences, archaeological evaluation of relevant borehole and test pit data*
 - *During remediation archaeological monitoring of groundworks in selected areas of the site (to be agreed with the Council in accordance with parameters specified in the WSI)*
 - *An archaeological watching brief/prior strip map and record (as appropriate) of areas agreed as archaeologically sensitive*
 - *Archaeological monitoring of deep excavations and piling in any areas indicated by the evaluation of borehole and test pit data to be of potential archaeological interest*
 - *The recording of the Riverside Pumping and Custom House to at Historic England Level 2/3, including photogrammetry and measured survey*
 - *A general programme of works and monitoring arrangements, including reasonable notification to the local planning authority of commencement of works*
 - *Details of staff involvement in carrying out the work (including specialists), and their qualifications and responsibilities*
 - *The timetable for completing post-excavation assessment.*

- (b) Provision for the analysis, archiving and publication of the results of the archaeological surveys and excavations shall be secured to the satisfaction of the local planning authority by the developer before any of the business units on development is brought into use.*
- (c) The development shall not without the prior written approval of the local planning authority be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved WSI.*

REASON: The site contains remains of significant archaeological interest, which should be recorded before they are destroyed.

North East Archaeological Research Ltd,
7th August 2020
