



**APPLICATION COM/232618 FOR
DEREGISTRATION OF PART OF COMMON
LAND AT THE SANDS, DURHAM**

**THE DEREGISTRATION AND EXCHANGE
OF COMMON LAND AND GREENS
(PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS
2007**

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF DAVID MASON
ON BEHALF OF DURHAM COUNTY
COUNCIL**

(Archaeology)

27 NOVEMBER 2020

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

1.1 My name is David Mason and I am employed by the Council as its Principal Archaeologist. I have held this post since December 2004. My duties are primarily concerned with the management of archaeology within the planning process.

1.2 I have a degree and a doctorate in Archaeology and am a full Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists as well as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

1.3 I understand my duty as an expert witness to the Inquiry and I have complied with and continue to comply with that duty. The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this inquiry is true. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true professional opinions.

1.4 My evidence concerns any archaeological interest in the relevant land parcels.

1.5 My evidence will address the impact of a change of use on the archaeology present in any of the land parcels.

1.6 I make reference to the following documents:

- Land at The Sands, Durham City: Geophysics and Trial-Trench Evaluation 2004. Archaeological Services Durham University, Report 1175 [ASUD 1175]. [Document 3i]
- Archaeological Evaluation Final Report. The Sands and Durham Sixth Form Centre Car-Parks, 2018. Northern Archaeological Associates Report 18/057. [NAA 18/057] [Document 3ii]

2 RELEASE LAND

2.1 Part of The Sands, Durham City.

An archaeological evaluation consisting of geophysical survey and trial-trenching of the area immediately east of the proposed Release Land was carried out in 2004 [Document 3i]. This encountered substantial levelling up deposits of 19th and 20th century date resting on natural subsoil. A similar exercise took place in 2018 on the land immediately west of the proposed

Release Land as part of the preliminaries for the new council HQ development [Document 3ii]. Apart from the remains of a mill race close to the riverbank which had been filled in during the 1930s no archaeological deposits or features were found and once again extensive levelling up deposits of relatively recent date were encountered.

Consequently, should the application regarding the Release Land be granted there would be no archaeological impact.

3 REPLACEMENT LAND

3.1 Land east of the Rivergreen Centre, Aykley Heads.

The proposed Replacement Land does not contain any upstanding archaeological features such as earthworks and there are no entries in the County Durham Historic Environment Record regarding the discovery of archaeological objects within or close to its boundaries. Its potential for containing sub-surface archaeological remains is unknown as it has never been investigated.

Given that there would be no built development on this area should the application concerning the Replacement Land be granted there would no impact on archaeology.

None of the alternative sites contain upstanding archaeological features and none are known to possess sub-surface archaeological remains. A use as Common Land would thus have no archaeological impact.

4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The application does not have any archaeological implications. The proposed Release Land does not contain any archaeological resource and the use as Common Land of any of the sites considered as Replacement Land would not not have any archaeological implications.