

Archaeological Priority Areas and GIS Capability

Partnership working: Abrams Archaeology and Arte-Facts

Archaeological Priority Areas or Areas of archaeological sensitivity are used extensively across the UK by local planning authorities. We have combined our skills with those of Arte-Facts to create a powerful skill-set for any organisation looking to create such a tool.

The key skills are:

- Research – to select land based upon what is known. For this we use Historic Environment Data, historic maps, LIDAR data, published sources, online sources and the vast collection of commercial reports (in the planning system).
- Topography and Geology – we use GIS to map heritage assets against geological deposits, watercourses and topographic changes. In this way we deepen understanding of a landscape and can use this to predict areas of sensitivity
- Data analysis – through use of tabular data and GIS imagery, we ensure that our clients receive an accurate set of polygons to identify land of different sensitivity
- Communicate and review – we work with our clients, paying attention to their outcomes. As the data and polygons take shape – so do new ideas. We are ready to adapt and to create the kind of tool that our clients need.

Case Study

In 2020-21 we produced the revised Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal for the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. This work was done on behalf of Historic England. Their team, the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, are the advisor to the local planning authority (Kingston Council). Updating the APA Appraisal document for Kingston Upon Thames will, upon completion feed into decisions made upon development proposals for the Borough. It also forms a supporting document to the emerging Kingston Local Plan.

Development within the Borough can potentially improve the quality of life for residents and properly informed and considered decisions (including an element of consideration for archaeology) align with Historic England's main purpose (to improve people's lives by protecting and championing the historic environment). We worked closely with the Greater London Historic

Key Projects:

Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames, Archaeology Priority Area review on behalf of Historic England (GIS, Graphics, APA creation)

Grimley Solar Farm (GIS, Graphics, data-handling, research)

Melbourne Pool Flood Alleviation Scheme (GIS, Graphics, data-handling, research)

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Environment Record (GLHER) and the Surrey County Council HER in order to produce the report.

This London Borough contains land which was formerly Cyninges *tun* (838 AD). The name means 'the king's manor or estate' from the Old English words *cyning* and *tun*. *This later became Kingestowne upon Thames (1589¹)*. It belonged to the king in the early Medieval period and was the earliest royal borough. It lies within the Thames Valley National Character Area (115) within which the "*River Thames provides a unifying feature through a very diverse landscape of urban and suburban settlements, infrastructure networks, fragmented agricultural land, historic parks, commons, woodland, reservoirs and extensive minerals workings.*"² While Kingston upon Thames is a small portion of National Character Area 115, it contains many of these attributes. The north-western part has an urban feel in Kingston Town centre, while Surbiton, in popular culture, has become iconic as an example of suburbia³. Coombe Hill has leafy residential streets and some relatively large green spaces (golf courses). It lies immediately adjacent to Richmond Park and close to Wandsworth Common. The land takes on a rural, agrarian and open character towards the southern end, particularly at Telegraph Hill. There is Woodland to the east and west of this narrow end of the Borough. The Hogsmill River flows north-westwards across the Borough and intersects it at a broadly central point, just within the Borough (Old Malden) is the location where John Everett Millais painted the backdrop to *Ophelia* (1851-52). The boundaries of the Borough are defined by ancient watercourses. Notably, the western boundary of the Borough is marked by a watercourse (Tolworth Brook) which rises at The Grapsome and runs north through Chessington and the Berrylands to join the Hogsmill River. Along the eastern boundary of the borough runs the Bonesgate Stream, another tributary of the Hogsmill River. The Thames defines part of the western boundary at Kingston Town.

Our work has led to the review of existing, known landscapes along with the identification of new clusters of classes of remains. It covers prehistory to the modern period and it describes remains of an agricultural, industrial settlement and military nature.

The Appraisal was produced on time and to budget. Feedback from the key stakeholders was positive.

Can we help? – Are you a local planning authority? A Historic Environment Team? A Charity? A landowner?

Would you benefit from expert analysis of your land? We are ready to help and to provide a bespoke fee for our services.

¹ Mills, A.D. (2010). "Kingston upon Thames". A Dictionary of London Place Names (2nd ed.)

² NCA Profile:115 Thames Valley (NE379)

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3865943?category=587130> – accessed 20/10/2020.

³ Page 178. The Making of a Suburb. David Jeevendrampillai. In: Tilley, C. (ed). 2019. London's Urban Landscape. Another Way of Telling.

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