

East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042

**Site Selection report Addendum –
Historic Environment Site Assessment
Axminster**



November 2025

Contact details

Planning Policy
East Devon District Council
Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, HONITON,
EX14 1EJ

Phone: 01404 515616

Email: planningpolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk

www.eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/
[@eastdevon](https://www.instagram.com/eastdevon)

To request this information in an alternative format or language please phone 01404 515616 or email csc@eastdevon.gov.uk

Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
2	Site Reference Axmi_02	6
3	Site Reference Axmi_08	12
4	Site Reference Axmi_09	17

1 Introduction

- 1.1 East Devon District Council is preparing a Local Plan covering the period 2020 to 2042 that will allocate sites for development. The site selection process is a judgement that balances top-down strategic issues relating to the Local Plan district-wide housing and employment requirements and the spatial strategy for the distribution of development, with the specific factors in the site assessments. For each settlement, a Site Selection report¹ contains the assessment of sites and identifies those which will be allocated, alongside those that will not, with reasons why.
- 1.2 The Regulation 19 Publication Draft Local Plan consultation took place from February to March 2025. Historic England (HE) and Devon County Council (DCC) identified major concerns for some sites, relating to the impact upon the historic environment. This report is an addendum to the Historic Environment Site Assessment prepared for the sites at Axminster, where Historic England and Devon County Council comments required further assessment.
- 1.3 The HE consultation response on the first Regulation 19 Local Plan concluded that the allocation of sites Axmi_02, Axmi_08 and Axmi_09 is unsound and should be removed from the plan. Otherwise, a desk-based assessment of the area of high archaeological sensitivity and potentially a site evaluation would be needed to justify a site allocation.
- 1.4 The full HE comments were:
- “Adjacent to Woodbury Lane and surrounded by the proposed allocation on two sides is the Scheduled Monument known as ‘Roman fort and later Romano-British settlement at Woodbury Farm’. This is a heritage asset of the highest significance according to the NPPF. Nearby to the west is the line of a Roman Road known as the Fosse Way (as well as WWII records on the HER). The site assessment report notes that associated archaeology may extend beyond the site, particularly to the west. There is therefore potential for significant impacts on archaeology, of a magnitude as yet unknown, which the site selection report acknowledges ‘may constrain or prohibit any development on parts of the site. We recommend that this site allocation is removed from the Plan. Otherwise, as this is an area of high archaeological sensitivity, a desk-based assessment and potentially a site evaluation would be needed to justify a site allocation. Please refer to the Plan-making section of our guidance on Planning and Archaeology, in particular from p24.”
- 1.5 DCC objected to the allocation of sites Axmi_02, Axmi_08 and Axmi_09 until further archaeological work was undertaken to determine the sites suitability for future development

¹ Site Selection reports are available at: [Evidence and Examination Library - Site Allocations \(SAL\) - East Devon](#)

as they lie in proximity to the Roman fort (a scheduled monument) and settlement at Woodbury Farm, Axminster.

- 1.6 The DCC Historic Environment Team provided detailed advice on the extent and scope of the archaeological works required to determine the suitability of the sites for allocation. Based on this, an archaeological investigation has been undertaken for the land in Axmi_02 and Axmi_08, which is closest to the scheduled monument and a geophysical survey on Axmi_09 commenced in November.
- 1.7 The investigations on sites Axmi_02 and Axmi_08 have demonstrated that there is a concentration of archaeological deposits, associated with the Romano-British settlement, along the northern edge of allocation site Axmi_02, and the concentration of archaeological remains seems to diminish to the south. The archaeological team at DCC has advised that this northern part of this allocation area should not be developed and should be preserved in situ. They suggest that it may be appropriate to use this area as public open space with heritage information to enhance and better reveal the significance of the site as a heritage asset. The extent of any such protected area will need to be based upon a consideration of the results of the field evaluation, but an interim summary report shows that, in principle, access can be taken from Musbury Road into the site and that any impacts on heritage assets with archaeological interest can be mitigated by a programme of archaeological work to investigate and record the heritage assets prior to any development/construction work taking place in this area.
- 1.8 Revisions have been made to the policy wording of the plan to reflect the significance of the archaeological interest on the site. The archaeological team at Devon County Council maintain its objection to Axmi_09 until the results of survey work that commenced in November 2025 and any intrusive field evaluation that may subsequently be required.
- 1.9 This report is an addendum to the Historic Environment Site Assessment prepared for sites Axmi_02, Axmi_08 and Axmi_09 in response to Local Plan comments from Historic England and Devon County Council and informed by the further archaeological work.

2 Site Reference Axmi_02

Site details

Settlement: Axminster

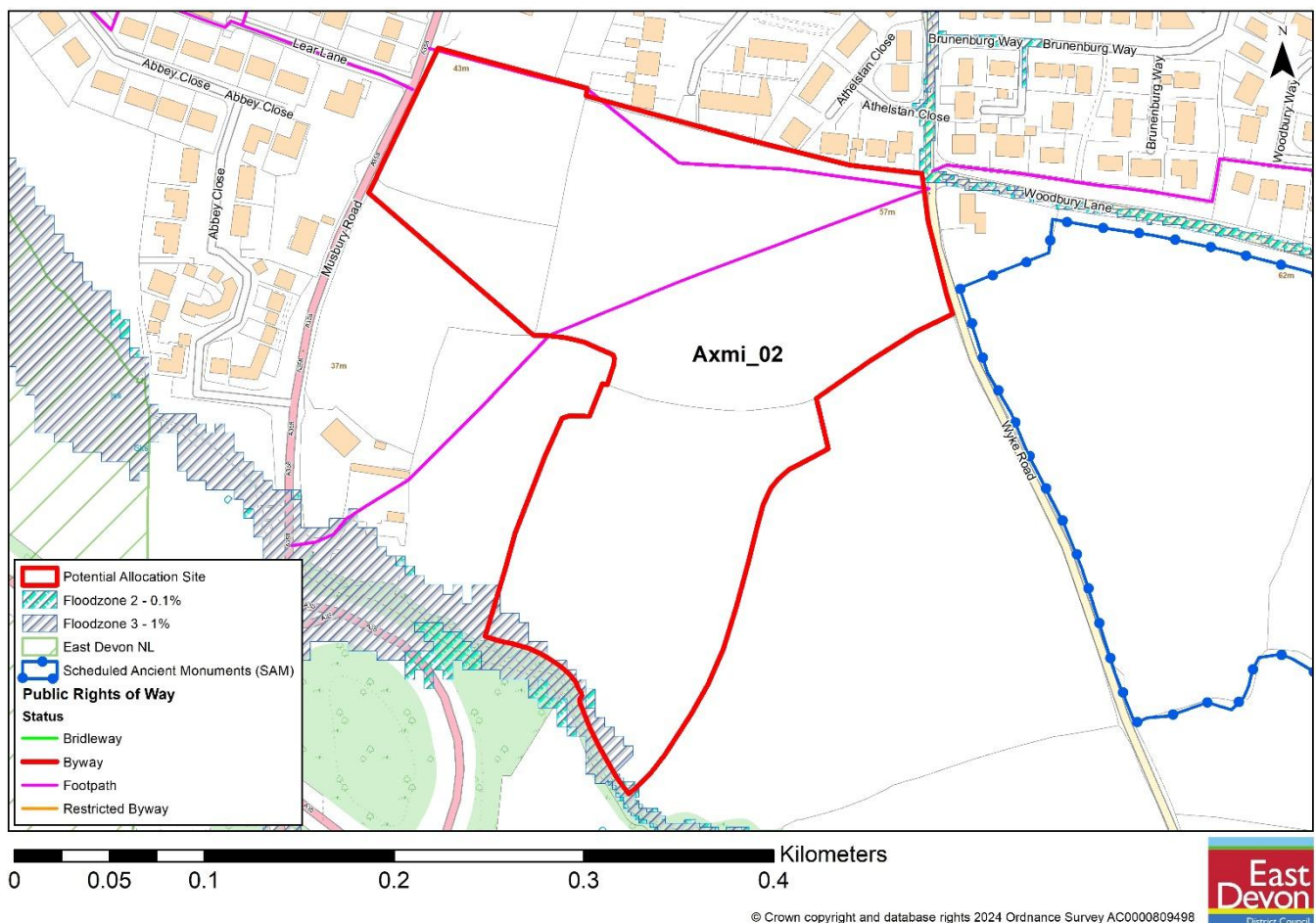
Reference number: Axmi_02

Site area (ha): 5.6

Address: Land North of Shoals, Musbury Road, Axminster, Devon, EX13 8TQ

Proposed use: Housing

Site map



Photos



Looking west from field gate to Wyke Road



Looking east across site to field gate to Wyke Road

Historic Environment Site Assessment

Notes on history of area

According to the Axminster Heritage Centre the origins of the town date back to the Bronze and Stone Ages.

Axminster lies on two major Roman roads and there was a Roman fort on the crossroads at Woodbury Farm just to the south of the town. By the 8th Century there was a monastic church to the south of the town and the Axminster became a fortified stronghold. The right to hold weekly markets was granted in 1210, establishing Axminster as a busy market town. In 1246 land was given to Cistercian monks, who built an abbey at Newenham. The monks allowed Axminster to establish burgage plots, which extended the settlements boundaries and marked a transition between a village and a town.

In 1644 Axminster was burnt to the ground during the English Civil War, the most complete damage of any English town in that conflict. At least 200 houses and workshops were rebuilt by the manorial lord at a cost of £10,000. From 1658 Axminster was an important stop on the coaching route between Exeter and London and The George Inn was built on its current site in 1759. The Axminster Carpet Manufactory was started in 1755, but declared bankrupt in 1835.

The railway reached Axminster in 1860, boosting commercial opportunities. The carpet industry was restarted in 1937.

Axminster, only 8 miles from the coast, was completely encircled by defences during the Second World War forming an anti-tank island on the Taunton Stop Line.

Overall conclusion - Medium/high impact

Development on the northern part of the site would have a high impact. This means that a significant effect is predicted. Mitigation unlikely to be possible. An impact that would compromise the asset(s) cultural heritage value to the extent that the attributes that led to its designation, or ability to understand or appreciate its value, are diminished and compromised. This would involve a loss of significance that could not be resolved through mitigation.

On the parts of the site where there is not a high impact, there is likely to be a medium impact. This means that there are no significant effects which cannot be mitigated. An impact is predicted, but would not compromise the asset(s) cultural heritage value to the extent that the attributes that led to its designation, or ability to understand or appreciate its value, are diminished or compromised. Mitigation may make the impact acceptable. The overall significance of the asset would not therefore be materially changed.

Step 1. Identify any heritage assets potentially affected	
Is the site within 100 metres of a designated heritage asset?	Yes Axmi_02 is on the opposite side of a lane from a Roman fort and later Romano-British settlement, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
Could development of the site affect any heritage asset (designated or non-designated) or its setting?	Yes Development of the site would affect significant archeological remains associated with the adjoining SAM. Archaeological work has demonstrated that there is a concentration of archaeological deposits, associated with the Romano-British settlement, along the northern edge of the site.
List any heritage assets potentially affected.	1. Roman settlement at Woodbury Farm (SAM).
Step 2. Existing contribution of site to significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 1	
Description of asset	Roman settlement at Woodbury Farm (SAM) Roman settlement of late second to early fourth century, overlying a first century Roman military fort at Woodbury Farm. The settlement extended to the west, and possibly to the south and east of the fort.
Significance of asset and setting	High Although not within the designated SAM area, the archaeological work has revealed a concentration of archaeological remains in the northern edge of the site. These are clearly associated with the scheduled monument to the east. The DCC historic environment team advise that great weight should be given to their conservation as required by paras 212 and 213 of the NPPF (2024) so that this area is not developed and is preserved in situ.
Relationship of site with heritage asset	The site is on the opposite side of a narrow lane from the SAM.
Level of contribution (site to heritage asset)	Significant
Further assessment required?	Yes, plan policy requires a programme of phased archaeological field evaluation prior to the submission of a planning application to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation to understand the presence and significance of any archaeological remains.

Step 3. Identifying potential impact on significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 1	
What impact would development have on the heritage asset and its setting?	Major There is evidence that the northern part of the site has a concentration of archaeological deposits associated with the Romano-British settlement. Advice from the DCC historic environment team is that this area should not be developed.
Could the site be developed in a way that minimised potential impact?	Yes, plan policy requires a masterplan that will be informed by the findings of the archaeological field evaluation and will demonstrate how development will conserve the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and associated archaeological remains and addresses how adverse effects can be minimised and made acceptable and heritage-related public benefits realised.
Would the development affect the heritage asset in other ways?	Yes, the development of the site would extend the town to the south this would increase the noise and activity associated with urban life to the detriment of the quiet, contemplative environment currently enjoyed around this side of the SAM.
Step 4. How to maximise enhancements and avoid harm	
Heritage asset 1 maximising enhancement	
Could the development improve public access to and interpretation of the heritage asset?	Yes, plan policy requires the creation of a public open space in the north of the site with appropriate publicly accessible heritage information that enhances and better reveals the significance of the Roman and Romano-British settlement
Would development enable further research and recording of the heritage asset?	Yes, plan policy requires a programme of phased archaeological field evaluation prior to the submission of a planning application to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation to understand the presence and significance of any archaeological remains.
Would development enable better revealing of the significance of the heritage asset?	Yes, plan policy requires a programme of phased archaeological field evaluation prior to the submission of a planning application to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation to understand the presence and significance of any archaeological remains.
Would development enable the asset to be removed from the at risk register?	No
Heritage asset 1 avoiding harm	

Are there reasonable alternative sites?	Yes
Could the site boundary be changed to avoid harm?	The inclusion of the whole site in the allocation is the best way to deliver further archaeological investigation, protect the historic assets and improve public access and interpretation.
Could the amount of development be reduced to avoid harm?	This issue will be considered through masterplanning.
Would a different type of development (use) avoid harm?	No
Could design avoid harm?	Yes – through masterplanning as required by plan policy.
Notes	None

3 Site Reference Axmi_08

Site details

Settlement: Axminster

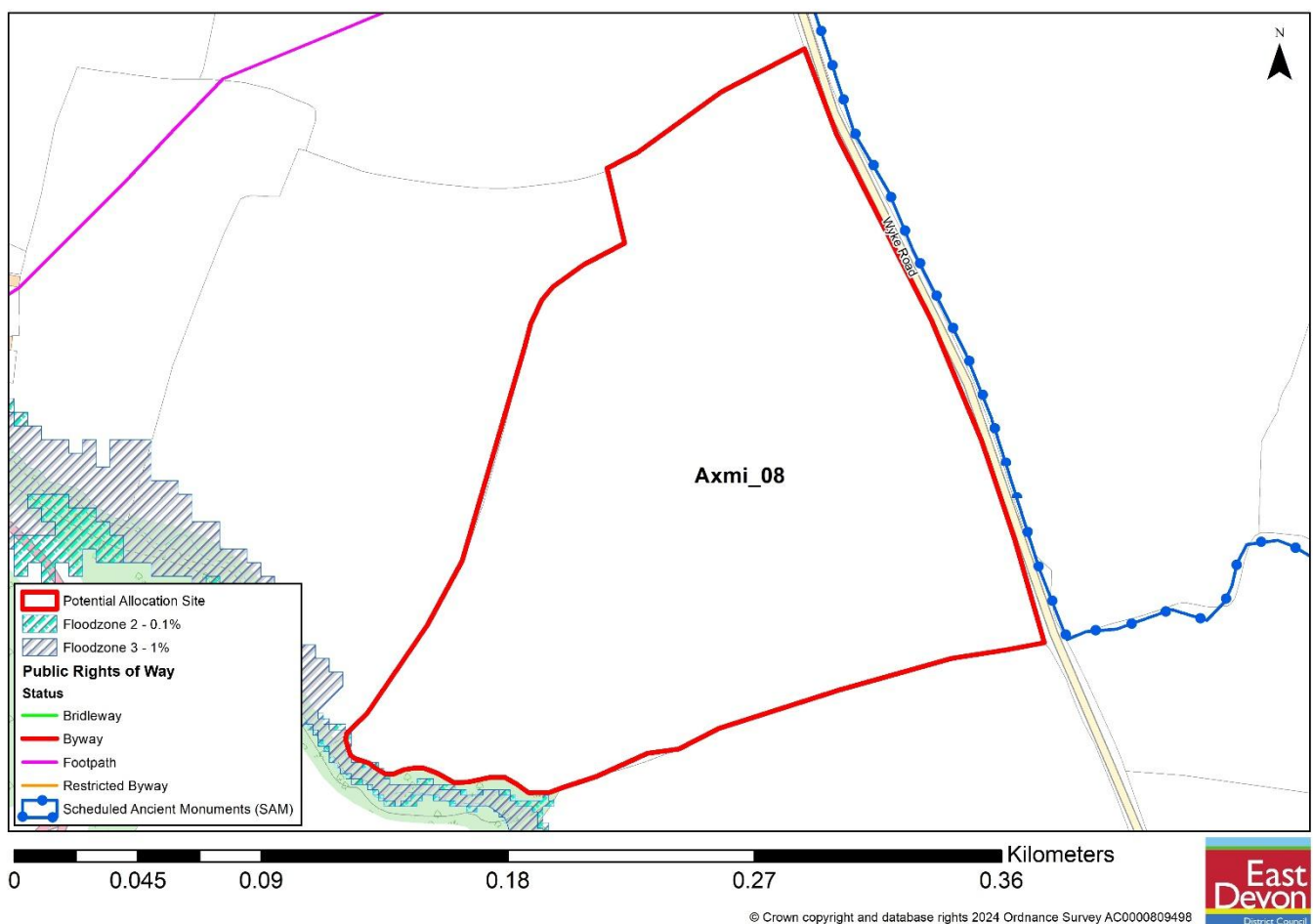
Reference number: Axmi_08

Site area (ha): 3.75

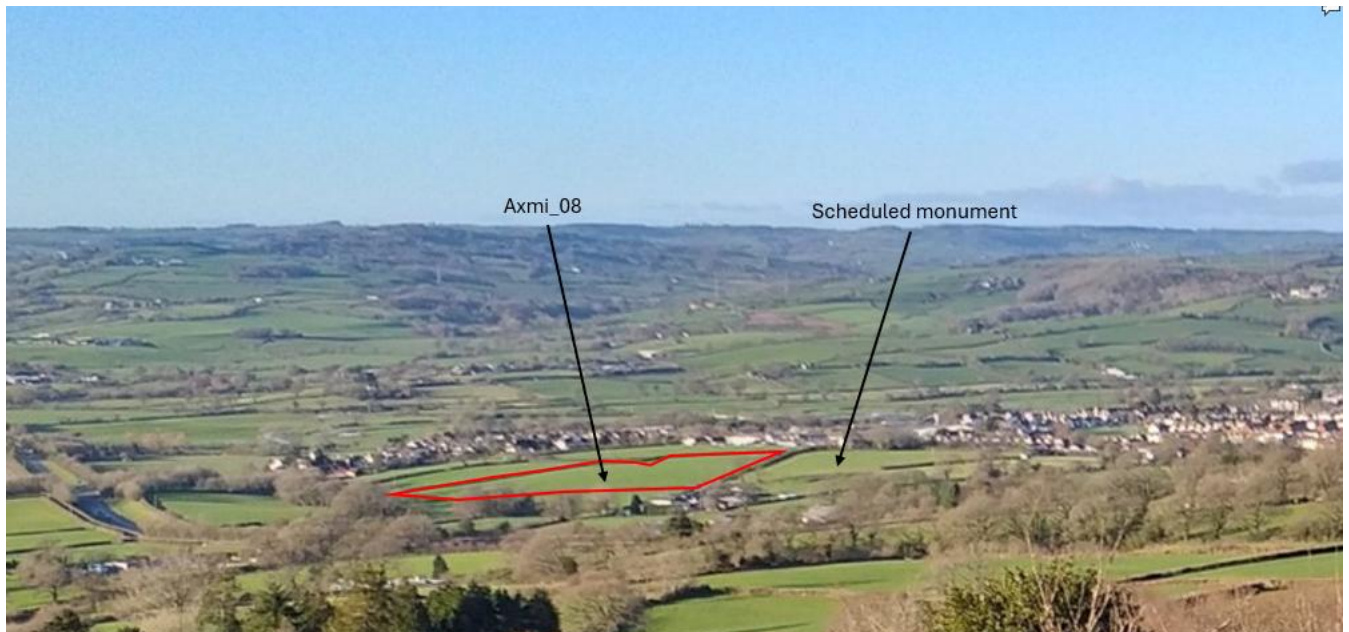
Address: Land off Wyke Lane, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5TL

Proposed use: Housing

Site map



Photos



View from Trinity Hill to south of site with location of Axmi_08 indicated in red.



Looking west across the site.

Historic Environment Site Assessment

Notes on history of area

See Axmi_02

Overall conclusion - medium impact.

This means that there are no significant effects which cannot be mitigated. An impact is predicted, but would not compromise the asset(s) cultural heritage value to the extent that the attributes that led to its designation, or ability to understand or appreciate its value, are diminished or compromised. Mitigation may make the impact acceptable. The overall significance of the asset would not therefore be materially changed.

Step 1. Identify any heritage assets potentially affected	
Is the site within 100 metres of a designated heritage asset?	Yes Axmi_08 is on the opposite side of a lane from a Roman fort and later Romano-British settlement, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
Could development of the site affect any heritage asset (designated or non-designated) or its setting?	Yes
List any heritage assets potentially affected.	1. Roman settlement at Woodbury Farm (SAM)
Step 2. Existing contribution of site to significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 1	
Description of asset	Roman settlement at Woodbury Farm (SAM) Roman settlement of late second to early fourth century, overlying a first century Roman military fort at Woodbury Farm. The settlement extended to the west, and possibly to the south and east of the fort.
Significance of asset and setting	High
Relationship of site with heritage asset	The site is on the opposite side of a narrow lane from the SAM.
Level of contribution (site to heritage asset)	Significant
Further assessment required?	Yes Yes, plan policy requires a programme of phased archaeological field evaluation prior to the submission of a planning application to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation to understand the presence and significance of any archaeological remains.
Step 3. Identifying potential impact on significance of heritage asset	

Heritage asset 1	
What impact would development have on the heritage asset and its setting?	Major
Could the site be developed in a way that minimised potential impact?	Yes, plan policy requires a masterplan that will be informed by the findings of the archaeological field evaluation and will demonstrate how development will conserve the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and associated archaeological remains and addresses how adverse effects can be minimised and made acceptable and heritage-related public benefits realised.
Would the development affect the heritage asset in other ways?	Yes, the development of the site would extend the town to the south this would increase the noise and activity associated with urban life to the detriment of the quiet, contemplative environment currently enjoyed around this side of the SAM.
Step 4. How to maximise enhancements and avoid harm	
Heritage asset 1 maximising enhancement	
Could the development improve public access to and interpretation of the heritage asset?	Yes, as part of the wider allocation. Plan policy requires the creation of a public open space in the north of the adjoining site (Axmi_02) with appropriate publicly accessible heritage information that enhances and better reveals the significance of the Roman and Romano-British settlement
Would development enable further research and recording of the heritage asset?	Yes, plan policy requires a programme of phased archaeological field evaluation prior to the submission of a planning application to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation to understand the presence and significance of any archaeological remains.
Would development enable better revealing of the significance of the heritage asset?	Yes, plan policy requires a programme of phased archaeological field evaluation prior to the submission of a planning application to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation to understand the presence and significance of any archaeological remains.
Would development enable the asset to be removed from the at risk register?	No
Heritage asset 1 avoiding harm	
Are there reasonable alternative sites?	Yes
Could the site boundary be changed to avoid harm?	The inclusion of the whole site in the allocation is the best way to deliver further archaeological investigation, protect the

	historic assets and improve public access and interpretation.
Could the amount of development be reduced to avoid harm?	This issue will be considered through masterplanning as required by plan policy.
Would a different type of development (use) avoid harm?	No
Could design avoid harm?	Yes – through masterplanning as required by plan policy.
Notes	

4 Site Reference Axmi_09

Site details

Settlement: Axminster

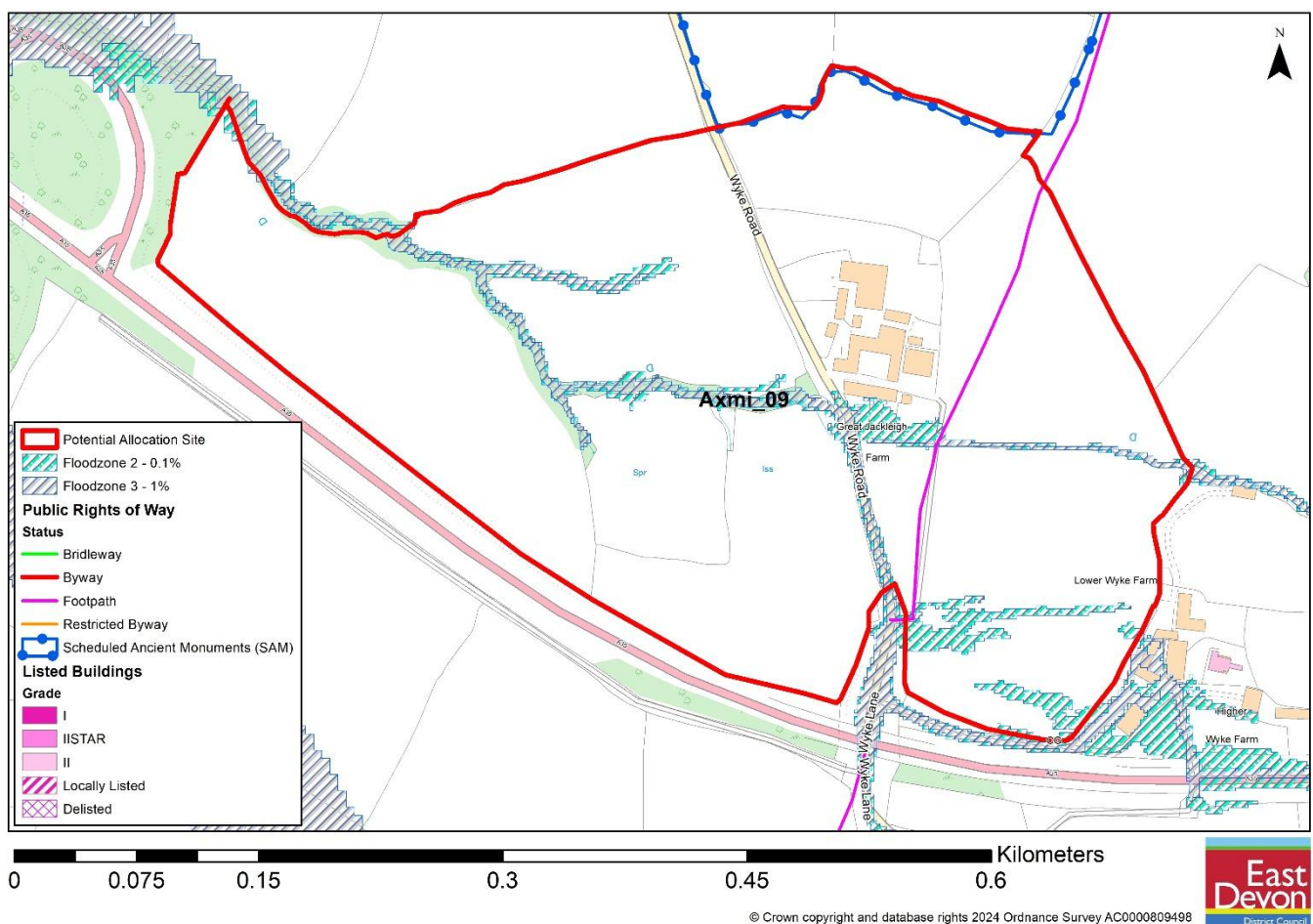
Reference number: Axmi_09

Site area (ha): 15.34

Address: GREAT JACKLEIGH FARM, AXMINSTER, EX13 8TN

Proposed use: Housing

Site map



Photos



Looking east from Wykes Lane towards Higher Wyke Farm

Historic Environment Site Assessment

Notes on history of area

See Axmi_02.

Overall conclusion - medium impact.

This means that there are no significant effects which cannot be mitigated. An impact is predicted, but would not compromise the asset(s) cultural heritage value to the extent that the attributes that led to its designation, or ability to understand or appreciate its value, are diminished or compromised. Mitigation may make the impact acceptable. The overall significance of the asset would not therefore be materially changed.

Step 1. Identify any heritage assets potentially affected	
Is the site within 100 metres of a designated heritage asset?	Yes Axmi_09 is within 40 m of Higher Wyke Farm, Wyke Road, a Grade II Listed Building. Axmi_09 is adjacent to a Roman fort and later Romano-British settlement, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Could development of the site affect any heritage asset (designated or non-designated) or its setting?	yes Development of the site would affect significant archeological remains associated with the adjoining SAM and nearby Listed Building.
List any heritage assets potentially affected.	1. Roman settlement at Woodbury Farm (SAM) 2. Higher Wyke Farm, Wyke Road
Step 2. Existing contribution of site to significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 1	
Description of asset	Roman settlement at Woodbury Farm (SAM) Roman settlement of late second to early fourth century, overlying a first century Roman military fort at Woodbury Farm. The settlement extended to the west, and possibly to the south and east of the fort.
Significance of asset and setting	High
Relationship of site with heritage asset	The SAM abuts the proposed development site.
Level of contribution (site to heritage asset)	Significant
Further assessment required?	Yes Yes, plan policy requires a programme of phased archaeological field evaluation prior to the submission of a planning application to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation to understand the presence and significance of any archaeological remains.
Step 3. Identifying potential impact on significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 1	
What impact would development have on the heritage asset and its setting?	Major
Could the site be developed in a way that minimised potential impact?	Yes, plan policy requires a masterplan that will be informed by the findings of the archaeological field evaluation and will demonstrate how development will conserve the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and associated archaeological remains and addresses how adverse effects can be minimised and made acceptable and heritage-related public benefits realised.
Would the development affect the heritage asset in other ways?	Yes, the development of the site would extend the town to the south this would increase the noise and activity associated with urban life to the detriment of the quiet, contemplative environment currently enjoyed around this side of the SAM.

Step 4. How to maximise enhancements and avoid harm	
Heritage asset 1 maximising enhancement	
Could the development improve public access to and interpretation of the heritage asset?	Yes, as part of the wider allocation. Plan policy requires the creation of a public open space in Axmi_02 with appropriate publicly accessible heritage information that enhances and better reveals the significance of the Roman and Romano-British settlement
Would development enable further research and recording of the heritage asset?	Yes, plan policy requires a programme of phased archaeological field evaluation prior to the submission of a planning application to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation to understand the presence and significance of any archaeological remains.
Would development enable better revealing of the significance of the heritage asset?	Yes, plan policy requires a programme of phased archaeological field evaluation prior to the submission of a planning application to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation to understand the presence and significance of any archaeological remains.
Would development enable the asset to be removed from the at risk register?	No
Heritage asset 1 avoiding harm	
Are there reasonable alternative sites?	Yes
Could the site boundary be changed to avoid harm?	The inclusion of the whole site in the allocation is the best way to deliver further archaeological investigation, protect the historic assets and improve public access and interpretation.
Could the amount of development be reduced to avoid harm?	This issue will be considered through masterplanning as required by plan policy.
Would a different type of development (use) avoid harm?	No
Could design avoid harm?	Yes – through masterplanning as required by plan policy.
Notes	None

Step 2. Existing contribution of site to significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 2	
Description of asset	Higher Wyke Farm, Wyke Road Grade II listed farmhouse, no longer in use. Circa early-mid C17 reconstruction and enlargement of an earlier house; remodelled circa early C19. Remains of cob walls, reconstructed in stone rubble with dressed stone quoins and footings. Gable-ended roofs, formerly thatched, reclad in corrugated-iron sheets. Gable-end stone stack with short brick shaft and truncated stone lateral stack. The early-mid C17 reconstruction is a good example of a unheated central room plan house, remodelled in about the early C19 and little altered since.
Significance of asset and setting	High Higher Wyke Farm is a Grade II listed building. It forms part of a farm complex within a rural landscape, although the A.30 Trunk Road is around 60 metres to the south.
Relationship of site with heritage asset	The proposed development site includes the field just to the west of the farm complex, around 50 metres from the listed building, although there are buildings between the two.
Level of contribution (site to heritage asset)	Moderate
Further assessment required?	No
Step 3. Identifying potential impact on significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 2	
What impact would development have on the heritage asset and its setting?	Moderate Development would have limited impact on the heritage asset and it's immediate setting, but it would have a significant impact on the wider rural setting for the farm complex of which it is a part.
Could the site be developed in a way that minimised potential impact?	Yes, an open buffer could be maintained around the farm complex to minimise, but not remove the impact of development on the site.
Would the development affect the heritage asset in other ways?	Yes, the development of the site would extend the town into the countryside that provides the wider setting for the listed building. This would result in additional human activity and would change the ambiance of the land to the west of the heritage asset

Step 4. How to maximise enhancements and avoid harm	
Heritage asset 2 maximising enhancement	
Could the development improve public access to and interpretation of the heritage asset?	No
Would development enable further research and recording of the heritage asset?	No
Would development enable better revealing of the significance of the heritage asset?	No
Would development enable the asset to be removed from the at risk register?	No
Heritage asset 2 avoiding harm	
Are there reasonable alternative sites?	Yes
Could the site boundary be changed to avoid harm?	See notes
Could the amount of development be reduced to avoid harm?	See notes
Would a different type of development (use) avoid harm?	No
Could design avoid harm?	See notes
Notes	Providing appropriate landscaping between the housing and heritage asset and careful design of buildings and spaces could reduce the impact on the setting on the listed building. However, the rural setting of the farm complex would inevitably be eroded if the site were to be developed.
