



Historic England

Mr Ben Glover
North Herts Council
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Direct Dial: 07867 902 092

Our ref: PL00801993

28 May 2026

Dear Mr Glover

Thank you for your EIA Screening Opinion request for a proposal for 57 dwellings, green infrastructure and associated works on a 6.75ha site between Claybush Road and Kingsland way on the southern edge of the village of Ashwell.

The site lies between the Scheduled Monuments of Arbury Banks Iron Age Hillfort (NHLE no. 1008981), 750m to its west, and that of Crop Marks of five Ring Ditches west of Station Road, Ashwell (NHLE no. 1451703), around 300m to its east which is thought to represent a dispersed barrow cemetery. The site lies close to the Ashwell Conservation Area - which contains a number of highly-graded listed buildings - and in a rich landscape of undesignated archaeology demonstrating the exceptional time depth of human occupation at Ashwell.

This last resource includes numerous cropmarks such as a possible iron age burial enclosure recorded in the adjacent field, a possible Roman villa identified 500m south west, as well as an excavated neolithic henge further east. Ashwell Street north of the site is thought to represent the line of a Roman road, one with potential prehistoric antecedents.

Arbury Banks iron age hillfort sits on high ground above the screening site and was likely sited there for reasons to include commanding the landscape to its north east down into the valley of the River Ree and Ruddy Stream; a setting which would include the screening site. Ashwell's location at the northernmost tip of the Chilterns chalk hills gives the settlement and its monuments a liminal significance as they look out over the much different, wider and flatter lands of Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire to the north.

The source of the Rhee rises around 325m north of the site at Ashwell Springs, which has attracted cultural and religious activity for thousands of years.

Development of the site would constitute an urban extension of the village and interpose between the designated heritage asset of Arbury Banks and some of the elements of the surrounding geographic and cultural landscape that comprise its setting. It would also likely affect buried archaeological heritage. No details of the scheme are provided at this stage, but excavations and planting for the planned green



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infrastructure may well compound the heritage impact effects of two and three storey housing.

I advise that the design and scope of any development proposals at the site are informed from the start by both detailed archaeological assessment and also assessments of the impact to settings of the designated assets affected. I recommend that you also consult your archaeological planning advisers at Hertfordshire CC over precise archaeological assessment methodologies to adopt at the site. Heritage impacts should be considered and avoided from an early stage in the development of any proposals.

If your LPA determines that a EIA is appropriate at the site, I recommend that archaeology and cultural heritage be scoped in to that work.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Single
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