

Alex Howard
Development Control
North Hertfordshire District Council

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County Hall, Pegs Lane
HERTFORD SG13 8DN**

Contact Peri Horsley
Tel 01992 555276
My ref P01/24/1371-1
Your ref 24/01371/FP
historic.environment@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Date: 29th October 2024

Dear Alex,

Re: Erection of seven dwellings (4 x 3-bed and 3 x 4-bed) including creation of vehicular access off The Causeway, carport, parking, landscaping, and associated works following demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings.- Hillcrest, The Causeway, Therfield, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9PP

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting us on the above application.

The proposed development is in Area of Archaeological Significance identified in the Local Plan. This covers the historic settlement of Therfield and it includes its mid 12th century motte and bailey castle [HER 0067] and the medieval parish church of St Mary [HER 4320]. The AAS also includes earthworks including ditches, platforms and quarry pits [HER 1659] c.90m to the north of the application site, which may be the remains of medieval settlement, as well as evidence of Saxo-Norman settlement at the castle, where an occupation layer with pottery dating from 1050 to 1100 was excavated beneath the motte, in 1964. Recent archaeological evaluation, followed by excavation, at Elm House immediately west of Hillcrest, revealed extensive evidence of medieval occupation and also features containing late Saxon/Saxo-Norman finds (a coin of the Saxon King Aethelred the Unready, and substantial quantities of 11th century St Neots Ware pottery).

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment was submitted in support of the application (Groundwork Archaeology, 2023). The assessment found that, likewise to the aforementioned, there is a high potential for encountering archaeology from the early medieval period, given its proximity to the Saxo-Norman settlement opposite. Furthermore, it found the site has a moderate to high potential for the Prehistoric period as well, given the presence of Bronze Age barrows in the study area.

I believe that the proposed development is such that it should be regarded as likely to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest and I recommend that the following provisions be made, should you be minded to grant consent:

1. The archaeological evaluation, via trial trenching, of the proposed development area, after the demolition of the current, modern dwelling and outbuilding, but prior to any further development commencing;
2. such appropriate mitigation measures indicated as necessary by that evaluation. These may include:
 - a. the preservation of any remains *in situ*, if warranted,
 - b. appropriate archaeological excavation of any remains before any development commences on the site, with provisions for subsequent analysis and publication of results,
 - c. archaeological monitoring of the groundworks of the development (also including a contingency for the preservation or further investigation of any remains then encountered),
 - d. such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological interests of the site;
3. the analysis of the results of the archaeological work with provision for the subsequent production of a report and an archive, and the publication of the results;
4. such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological interests of the site;

I believe that these recommendations are both reasonable and necessary to provide properly for the likely archaeological implications of this development proposal. I further believe that these recommendations closely follow the policies included within Policy 16 (para. 211, etc.) of the National Planning Policy Framework. In this case three appropriately worded conditions on any planning consent would be sufficient to provide for the level of investigation that this proposal warrants. I suggest the following wording:

A *No demolition/development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:*

1. *The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording*
2. *The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording as required by the evaluation results*
3. *The programme for post investigation assessment*
4. *Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording*
5. *Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
6. *Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
7. *Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.*

B *The demolition/development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A)*

C *The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out*

in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.

If planning consent is granted, I will be able to provide detailed advice concerning the requirements for the investigations, and to provide information on professionally accredited archaeological contractors who may be able to carry out the necessary work.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Peri Horsley
Historic Environment Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS
Sustainable Growth

Hertfordshire LEADS provides Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology, Design and Sustainability support to planning departments in Hertfordshire.