

Thomas Howe
Development Control
North Hertfordshire District Council

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Contact Andy Instone
Tel 01992 555241
My ref P01/26/0116-1
Your ref **26/00116/FP**
historic.environment@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Date: 27 April 2026

Dear Thomas,

Re: Erection of four detached dwellings and detached garage to serve plot 4 including hard and soft landscaping, parking and creation of vehicular access. |19 Walnut Tree Road Pirton Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 3PX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting us on the above application.

The applicant has submitted an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (DBA), *Abrams Archaeology*. Comments from the North Herts Archaeology Society (NHAS) have also been made. NHAS note that the DBA omits to consider at least two historic maps from the early nineteenth century. These are believed to show buildings on the site and NHAS consider it is possible they may date from the medieval period.

The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance as identified in the Local Plan. The Historic Environment Record (HER) notes that the site lies immediately adjacent to Scheduled Monument (SM) 1012325; *Toot Hill motte and bailey castle and shrunken medieval village*. Earthworks are visible within the site and given the proximity may be associated with the SM and therefore potentially of national significance (HER 32, 746). Saxon and medieval features were found immediately to the north at 17 Walnut Tree Road (HER 31642). Evidence for Saxon activity is rare in Hertfordshire. Another site in Pirton at Priors Hill found evidence of Saxon activity which was considered nationally important (HER 31108, 31109) and Scheduled by Historic England, *Anglo-Saxon settlement, and probable prehistoric ring ditches, west of Pirton village* (SM 1434415).

The site therefore has the potential to contain Heritage Assets of high and possibly national significance. Given that the DBA admits that any Heritage Assets are likely to be destroyed by this development then further archaeological information is required before we can advise you.

We would therefore recommend that - in accordance with NPPF (December 2024) para. 207, 212, fn 75 – the following investigation should be undertaken to describe the type, scale, and quality of heritage assets likely to be affected by the proposal:

- An archaeological trial trench evaluation

Informed advice can then be provided to the Planning Authority with reference to the impact of the development proposal on the historic environment. Where archaeology is identified, but does not meet NPPF, para. 207, 212, fn 75, an appropriate level of archaeological mitigation can then be secured by negative condition (NPPF, para. 218).

I hope that you will be able to accommodate the above recommendations.

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

Yours sincerely,

Andy Instone,
Senior Historic Environment Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS
Environmental Sustainability

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