

Paul Chaston
Development Control
North Hertfordshire District Council

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Contact Andy Instone
Tel 01992 555241
My ref P01/26/0558-1
Your ref **26/00558/HYA**
historic.environment@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Date: 27 April 2026

Dear Paul,

Re: Hybrid application for a mixed-use development to provide a total of up to 230 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2), an Independent Special School (ISS) and new sports pitch, with access from Bedford Road, landscaping, parking and SuDS comprising: Phase 1 Application for full planning permission for the erection of 100 dwellings, an ISS, new sports pitch and associated parking, landscaping, open space and SuDS; Phase 2 An outline application on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2) and associated works with access from Bedford Road (all matters reserved apart from access).|Land At Pound Farm Bedford Road Ickleford Hertfordshire SG5 3RS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting us on the above application.

The applicant has submitted an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (DBA), *RPS Group*, and a geophysical survey via magnetometry, *Sumo Geosurveys*. The DBA notes that the site is approximately 20ha in size. Assessment of the Historic Environment Record (HER) notes that most site in Hertfordshire over 1ha in size contain archaeological remains.

The DBA concedes “*The available information indicates an archaeological potential within the study site for the later prehistoric periods, the Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods....*” (paragraph 6.5). Archaeological remains from the Saxon period are extremely rare in Hertfordshire and have the potential to be of national significance. A site elsewhere in North Herts, in Pirton at Priors Hill found evidence of Saxon activity which was considered nationally important (Historic Environment Records 31108, 31109) and Scheduled by Historic England, *Anglo-Saxon settlement, and probable prehistoric ring ditches, west of Pirton village* (SM 1434415).

The DBA notes the conclusions of the geophysical survey (paragraph 6.6):

“Non-intrusive geophysical (magnetometer) survey has identified anomalies related to archaeological and possible archaeological features, focused within the western and southern area. These anomalies have been interpreted to form parts of several enclosures and possibly boundary ditches.”

It goes on to say:

“Numerous responses of uncertain origin were also recorded, and whilst archaeological origins for some of these have not been discounted.....The soil conditions were recorded during the survey to vary across the study site and it has been suggested that in parts of the site, some types of feature(s) may not produce measurable / identifiable magnetic anomalies,”

It concludes that this:

“could mean that the full extent of archaeological features / activity within the study site were not recorded during the survey”

The site therefore has uncertain potential to contain Heritage Assets with archaeological interest. Probable archaeological features of unknown date and significance have been identified by the geophysical survey, and the report admits that knowledge of the rest of the site from the survey is uncertain.

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.