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HENRY THOMAS
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Council Offices, Gernon Rd,
Letchworth Garden City SG6 3JF

Written Scheme of Investigation for Trial Trenching Evaluation - Greenleas, Bygrave Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 5DS

Dear Henry

I am writing in order to provide an updated version of the Written Scheme of Investigation for forthcoming Archaeological Evaluation at Greenleas, Bygrave Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 5DS.

This letter, and the revisions to the WSI, have been prepared in response to a letter (dated 14 March 2025) from Andy Instone, Senior Historic Environment Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS Environmental Sustainability (ref: P01/25/0531-1). That letter raised the following points and we have addressed all of these points. I have made notes (below) on each point in order to help the Updated WSI be processed, and approved, efficiently. The applicant is, naturally, keen that the WSI be approved soon so that the archaeological work on site can soon begin.

Points raised by letter from Hertfordshire LEADS:

- *the document should cover the whole project not just the trial trenching and provision have been made for further phases of work and additional method statements to support it*

Please see Section 2.1.2 which states the Condition text in full. We always do so in order to draw attention to the full range of potential ways a project could go. In this case that means Trial Trenching followed by Mitigation. We then go on to unpack and explain the Condition and its implications. Mitigation was covered in Section 2.2.2. We have now added Section 2.3 to further explain the possible mitigation to follow the evaluation. However, we cannot write a WSI to cover mitigation works which have yet to be defined. Such works will first need to be defined and then a follow on WSI will be produced to outline exactly how those will be carried out.

The WSI now states:

2.3 Possibility of Mitigation Stage Works

2.3.1 *Should the trial trenching evaluation of this land identify archaeological remains, then it is likely that a programme of mitigation works will follow. This WSI does not cover that mitigation stage of works as it is only through doing the evaluation that a need for mitigation will be confirmed. The appropriate technique for mitigation (e.g. Monitoring or Open Area Investigation) cannot be defined until the evaluation is completed. Neither can the spatial extent of any mitigation area, its depth or the complexity and date of archaeological remains being mitigated.*

2.3.2 *The Senior Historic Environment Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS, Sustainable Growth, Hertfordshire County Council (Senior Historic Environment Advisor) will advise the LPA as to the need and extent of mitigation works (if required). A separate WSI will be required to cover that work in detail.*

- *we require the contractor carrying out the works to write the WSI or as a minimum to provide a method statement as an addendum to the WSI*

The Contractor (PCA) has now provided a separate method statement as an addendum to the WSI. They had previously drawn up the trench plan in close collaboration with Abrams Archaeology in which we looked at below ground utilities and considered other practical matters.

- *4.3.2. this office and the LPA requires direct access if appropriate, to the onsite archaeological contractor*

Direct contact is encouraged and expected. The text at Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of the WSI explains how that can be safely achieved. There is no desire to avoid direct contact between the monitor and the archaeological contractor. The Consultant, in this case myself, needs to be a part of that useful communication and generally speaking it will be the Consultant updating the Hertfordshire LEADS team with news of the works on site. This allows for conversations on how the project is changing (or not) and allows for exploration of a need (or not) for follow on mitigation works. We use this system successfully with the Hertfordshire LEADS team on other projects.

6.2 Monitoring

The project will be monitored by the Senior Historic Environment Advisor on behalf of the LPA. Abrams Archaeology will make every effort to allow proper monitoring of the archaeological investigation. Any variations to this specification will be put in writing and approval sought.

6.3 Access

Reasonable access to the site will be arranged for the Local Planning Authority and their archaeological advisor, the Senior Historic Environment Advisor, who may wish to make site inspections to ensure that the archaeological investigations are progressing satisfactorily.

Therefore, the text at Section 4.3.2 is placed within the WSI as the Archaeological Consultant needs, on behalf of the client, to be involved in discussions which affect the way in which works on site are done. Only then can the Consultant ensure that resources are adequate to cover what can be a dynamic (changing) situation.

- *5. the report should include a HER Summary Sheet*

The HER Summary Sheet will form part of the report and text has been added in Section 5.1.9 of the WSI to make this clear.

- *we require c.v.s of the onsite staff to be submitted for approval, although this may be done after the WSI has been approved on the understanding fieldwork will not commence until they have been agreed*

It is not straightforward to know which of the team (by name) will carry out works on a site when we do not have a date for that work yet. We have inserted CVs for the senior staff involved in the project. Additional CVs can be supplied prior to the fieldwork taking place.

- *there should be confirmation that the museum has agreed in principle to take any archive generated by this project*

The Project has been given a Code by North Hertfordshire Museum. The purpose of the Code is to ensure that the project can now be tracked, archived and deposited with the Museum. The Data Management Plan within the WSI has been fully completed in line with requirements for Hertfordshire.

We look forward to prompt approval of the revised WSI. Please do feel free to ask any questions on any of the above.

Yours Sincerely

JOE ABRAMS
DIRECTOR