

Tom Rea
Development Control
North Hertfordshire District Council

**Postal Point CHN 108
Hertfordshire County Council
County Hall, Pegs Lane
HERTFORD SG13 8DN**

Contact Alison Tinniswood
Tel 01992 555276
My ref P01/24/1580-1
Your ref 24/01580/FP
historic.environment@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Date: 7 October 2024

Dear Tom,

Re: Erection of two 3-bedroom dwellings and two 1-bedroom apartments on land adjacent to School House, with 5 parking spaces and new vehicular access onto School Lane | School House School Lane Offley Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 3AT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting this office on the above application.

In correspondence dated 13 May 2020 we advised you on application 20/00594/OP to develop this site.

Recommendations

This advice is unchanged and is noted below.

Advice for Planning Application 20/00594/OP

The proposed development is located in an Area of Archaeological Significance identified in the Local Plan. This denotes the medieval core of Offley. An evaluation 8m to the south-west of the site identified an early post-conquest manorial complex [Historic Environment Record: 12743] at Westbury Farm. Features of 10th to 13th century date were identified, including a large posthole structure and ditches, and a large enclosure. Another evaluation to the south recorded features commonly associated with medieval buildings [HER 11488] and it is likely the manorial complex lies beyond the confines already identified, including on the proposed site. Prehistoric features were also identified during the work at Westbury Farm.

The site therefore has the potential to contain archaeological remains dating to the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval periods. Since the site appears to have remained undeveloped during the modern period any such remains that may be present may be well preserved.

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 field evaluation of the proposed development site, prior to any 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, as appropriate;
 4. such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological and historic 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. 199, etc.) of the National Planning Policy Framework, and relevant guidance contained in the National Planning Practice Guidance, and in the Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015).

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 suggested by the archaeological evaluation*
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.

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.