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Ben Glover
Development Control
North Hertfordshire District Council

Contact Andy Instone
Tel 01992 555241
My ref P01/25/2064-1
Your ref **25/02064/FP**
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Date: 9 January 2026

Dear Melissa,

Re: Erection of up to 50 dwellings including affordable housing, together with amenity space, landscaping and all associated infrastructure and works (all matters reserved except means of access). | Land Adjacent To 10 Hambridge Way Pirton Hertfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting us on the above application.

The proposed development lies between two Areas of Archaeological Significance, as identified in the Local Plan. The first, to the east, contains a series of likely prehistoric or Roman enclosures and field boundaries, identified from aerial photography. The second, to the west, covers the core of the village of Pirton which has a complex history, with origins in the early to middle Anglo-Saxon period. Archaeological features indicating settlement at this location from much earlier times are widespread, however, with Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman remains revealed through excavations particularly to the west of the village (e.g. Historic Environment Record nos. 553, 31109, 17170 & 18649).

The village also contains three Scheduled Monuments - Toot Hill motte and bailey castle (HER no. 32), a moated site at Rectory Farm (HER no. 2221), and a large area of intensive early to mid-Saxon occupation, including human burials, at Priors Hill (HER no. 31108).

Until recently, the distribution of known archaeology had indicated a focus of historic, and prehistoric, settlement in the centre and to the west of the village, with little archaeological investigation taking place to the east.

However recent investigations in advance of a housing development in the fields to the north of the proposed development site (to the rear of Elm Tree Farm) have identified comparatively significant later prehistoric remains, including human cremations, a post-built circular structure, a large number of pits containing pottery and some animal bone, and a boundary ditch (HER nos. 31348 & 31349). Specialist analysis of the pottery indicates that this site was occupied in the Late Bronze Age and/or Early Iron Age.

Nevertheless, these heritage assets do not appear to be of such significance to warrant designation.

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment submitted with this planning application (*Cotswold Archaeology, July 2025*) concludes “*it is considered unlikely that highly significant unknown buried archaeological remains occur within the Site [sic]*” (paragraph 4.24). A Geophysical Survey, via magnetometry, of the site which has also been submitted (*Sumo GeoSurveys, December 2024*) concludes, “*No magnetic responses have been recorded that could be interpreted as being of definite archaeological interest, except for ridge and furrow cultivation*” (paragraph 6.2.1).

Recommendations

Given that this is an Outline application with all matters reserved, we recommend that the final design of any masterplan is, if required revised to respect the results of the archaeological evaluation recommended below. This may include preservation of archaeological remains *in situ*, either by redesign of layout or foundations/ground disturbance. This may also include for example a possible historic Holloway or road identified by the North Herts Archaeology Society (*pers comm*) which runs along the edge of the site and may date from the medieval period.

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

1. the archaeological evaluation, of the development area, prior to the commencement of any development;
2. such appropriate mitigation measures indicated as necessary by that evaluation. Given this is an Outline application with all matters reserved we recommend that the Masterplan is revised as necessary to allow the following:
 - 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 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 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. These are referred to as A, B and C but can be numbered at your convenience. 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, and preservation of archaeological remains as required by the evaluation and revision of the Masterplan as necessary to reflect these requirements*
- 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. Provision to be made for public outreach and interpretation*
- 8. 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,

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.