

Alex Howard
Development Control
North Hertfordshire District Council

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

Contact Andy Instone
Tel 01992 555241
My ref P01/25/1514-1
Your ref **25/01514/FP**
historic.environment@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Date: 23 July 2025

Dear Alex,

Re: Erection of shop, forecourt canopy, car and jet wash, car and cycle parking, EV vehicle charging points, hard and soft landscaping, and bin stores following demolition of existing buildings. | Whitehorse Service Station Clothall Road Baldock Hertfordshire SG7 6PD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting us on the above application.

We note that we were not consulted pre-application.

The Design and Access Statement submitted with this planning application notes that *"Baldock is a Market Town in North Hertfordshire with a rich archaeological heritage from continuous occupation since prehistoric times"* (MS4 Architects LLP, section 2.1, page 6).

The proposed development site is lies within Area of Archaeological Significance no.96 as identified in the Local Plan. This notes that Baldock is an important Iron Age, Roman and medieval town. Part of Baldock is a Scheduled Monument (SM27913) which notes the Iron Age settlement and Roman town of Baldock. Furthermore, the evidence of Late Iron Age and Roman human burial at Baldock forms one of the largest and most important collections in the UK (over 2000 burials have been excavated and more remain to be discovered).

Historic England's website suggests that the Scheduled Monument may abut or even include part of the site, therefore we strongly recommend that clarification is sought from Historic England on this matter prior to determination, since works to the area of a Scheduled Monument without permission from the Secretary of State are a criminal offence.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) notes that three parallel triple ditches approximately 70m long were identified from geophysical survey in Walls Field and may continue into the site. This type often dates to the Iron Age and are a landscape feature of high significance. Sections cut across the ditches in 1968 produced late Iron Age and

Roman pottery (HER9994). In addition, to the north-west of the site, eight cremation burials were found by trial trenches in advance of road widening in 1968. The extent of the cemetery is unknown, but it ran along the main Roman road between Baldock and Braughing. All the burials dated to the later 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Some contained grave goods and accessory pots (HER13191).

The site is likely to have suffered some disturbance from the existing petrol garage on the site, nevertheless given the above, I believe that the proposed development 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 monitoring of the removal of any existing foundations from slab level and hardstanding;
2. the archaeological evaluation, of the development area, prior to the commencement of any development;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. 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. 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. *Provision to be made for public engagement 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.