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LAND AT LEGION HOUSE PAYNES PARK HITCHIN HERTFORDSHIRE

SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 17/01496/1
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: TL 1832 2920
SITE CODE: HIPP18
ACCESSION NO: HIT/PP 18

PREPARED FOR
MARKET HOMES (HITCHIN) LIMITED

Revised
JUNE 2018

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Plan showing proposed trench layout to the back of the document

Appendix 1.

1 SUMMARY

1.1 *An archaeological scheme of works is required during development at Legion House, Paynes Park, Hitchin, Hertfordshire.*

1.2 *The site lies in an archaeologically sensitive area, with stone tools spanning the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age, found to the east. There is limited Iron Age material, though a settlement of this period is suggested for a site to the northeast. Roman and Saxon settlement are known from the town and suggest an important centre during these periods. The town remained as a regional centre throughout the medieval period, encompassing the site.*

1.3 *The archaeological work will consist of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording followed by trial trenching in order to characterise any archaeological remains which may be present on the site.*

1.4 *On completion of the fieldwork a report will be prepared detailing the results of the scheme of works. The report will consist of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs*.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This document comprises a specification for an archaeological scheme of works comprising a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording followed by trial trenching on land at Paynes Park, Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

2.2 This document contains the following parts:

- 2.2.1 Overview.
- 2.2.2 Stages of work and methodologies.
- 2.2.3 List of specialists.
- 2.2.4 Programme of works and staffing structure of the project

3 SITE LOCATION

3.1 Hitchin is located *c.*7km northwest of Stevenage in North Hertfordshire. The proposed development site lies 230m northwest of the centre of Hitchin, as defined by the parish church of Saint Mary, centred on National Grid Reference TL 1832 2920.

4 PLANNING BACKGROUND

4.1 The archaeological investigations are required as a condition of planning permission (application 17/01496/1) for residential development, comprising construction of 12 flats within a three-storey building following the demolition of Legion House.

4.2 The archaeological curator has requested that a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during sub-surface demolition and subsequent trial trench

evaluation be undertaken. This current document provides a specification for such a scheme. Further stages of archaeological work may be required which will necessitate the preparation of further Written Schemes of Investigation.

5 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

5.1 As an urban area, local soils have not been mapped. Drift geology is recorded as comprising glaciofluvial sands and gravels which in turn seal a solid geology of chalk of the Zig Zag Formation (BGS 1993)

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

6.1 The earliest material recovered from the area comprises stone tools dating from the Palaeolithic period, though these are generally sourced from an area to the east of the site and were found during quarrying for gravel and brickearth. Stone tools of the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age are known from the vicinity. Neolithic features have been found to the west of the site and there are a number of possible Bronze Age barrows recorded in the vicinity.

6.2 There is a general paucity of Iron Age remains, though limited artefactual evidence suggests that settlement is likely. During the Romano-British period, Hitchin was likely an important centre, as evidenced by high status burials and masonry. Numerous finds of pottery and coins are recorded from the town.

6.3 It has been suggested that a Saxon inhumation cemetery lay to the southeast of the site. By the Middle Saxon period, Hitchin appears to have been an important centre for the Mercian royal family. The early settlement is likely to have been fortified and nearby excavations in Paynes Park have confirmed the presence of the *burh* ditch, with the possible continuation of this ditch passing through the current site. Hitchin was also an important ecclesiastical centre.

6.4 The medieval town had probably developed into a Borough by the 12th century and was centred on the Market Place and best represented by the 12th century church of St Mary, which probably is the successor to the Saxon minster church. The site lay within the core of the medieval town, though probably within the rear of burghage plots.

7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

7.1 The aim of the work will be to gather sufficient information for the archaeological curator to be able to formulate a policy for the management of the archaeological resources present on the site.

7.2 The objectives of the scheme of works will be to:

7.2.1 Establish the type of archaeological activity that may be present within the site.

7.2.2 Determine the likely extent of archaeological activity present within the site.

7.2.3 Determine the date and function of the archaeological features present on

the site.

7.2.4 Determine the state of preservation of the archaeological features present on the site.

7.2.5 Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features present within the site

7.2.6 Determine the extent to which the surrounding archaeological features extend into the application area.

7.2.7 Establish the way in which the archaeological features identified fit into the pattern of occupation and land-use in the surrounding landscape.

7.2.8 Determine the significance of the archaeological features identified and how they fit into published research agendas.

8 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

8.1 General considerations

8.1.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the investigation. A Risk Assessment will be prepared.

8.1.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practice issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). Archaeological Project Services is a CIfA registered archaeological organisation (no. 21) managed by a Member of the institute (MCIfA).

8.1.1 Any artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, will be removed from site to a secure store and the discovery promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office. The Portable Antiquities'/ Finds Liaison Officer will also be notified

8.1.2 A metal-detector (no discrimination) will be used to assist artefact recovery.

8.1.5 Prior to commencement of site operations, Archaeological Project Services will liaise with the Hertfordshire HER to ensure that the Site Code and Context Numbering system is compatible with the HER.

8.2 Methodology

8.2.1 The investigation will be undertaken during the groundwork phase of development and includes the archaeological monitoring of sub-surface demolition such as the removal of existing foundation trenches.

8.2.2 Stripped areas and trench sections will be observed to identify and record archaeological features that are exposed and to record changes in the geological conditions. The section drawings of the trenches will be recorded at

a scale of 1:10. Should features be recorded in plan these will be drawn at a scale of 1:20. Written descriptions detailing the nature of the deposits, features and fills encountered will be compiled on Archaeological Project Services pro-forma record sheets.

8.2.3 Where appropriate, topsoil, stripped areas and spoil will be scanned by metal detector to assist artefact recovery.

8.2.4 Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for later analysis.

8.2.5 Throughout the investigation a photographic record in monochrome print and colour digital images will be compiled and will consist of:

- the site during the investigation to show specific stages of work, and the layout of the archaeology within the area.
- individual features and, where appropriate, their sections.
- groups of features where their relationship is important.

8.2.6 Should human remains be located they will be left *in situ* and only excavated if absolutely necessary. Should removal be required, in order to achieve the aims and objectives described above, the appropriate Ministry of Justice licence will be obtained before the exhumation of the remains. In addition, the Local Environmental Health Department, coroner and the police will be informed, where appropriate.

9 TRIAL TRENCHING

9.1 Reasoning for this technique

9.1.1 Trial trenching enables the *in situ* determination of the sequence, date, nature, depth, environmental potential and density of archaeological features present on the site

9.1.2 The trenching proposal is for two 10m x 1.6m trenches located to examine geophysical anomalies and provide a sample, approximately 5%, coverage of the site, as shown on the attached figure.

9.2 General Considerations

9.2.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the investigation. A Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to commencement of work and will be updated as appropriate throughout the duration of the project.

9.2.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practice issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). Archaeological Project Services is an CIfA Registered Archaeological Organisation under the

management of a Member (MCIfA) of the institute.

9.2.3 Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office and the Portable Antiquities/Finds Liaison Officer. Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for later analysis.

9.2.4 Excavation of the archaeological features exposed will only be undertaken as far as is required to determine their date, significance, sequence, density and nature. All archaeological features exposed will be excavated and recorded unless otherwise agreed with the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Team. The investigation will, as far as is reasonably practicable, determine the level of the natural deposits to ensure that the depth of the archaeological sequence present on the site is established

9.2.5 Open trenches will be marked by hazard tape attached to road irons or similar poles. Subject to the consent of the archaeological curator, and following the appropriate recording, the trenches, particularly those of excessive depth, will be backfilled as soon as possible to minimise any health and safety risks.

9.3 Methodology

9.3.1 Removal of the topsoil and any other overburden will be undertaken by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. To ensure that the correct amount of material is removed and that no archaeological deposits are damaged, this work will be supervised by Archaeological Project Services. On completion of the removal of the overburden, the nature of the underlying deposits will be assessed by hand excavation before any further mechanical excavation that may be required. Thereafter, the trenches will be cleaned by hand to enable the identification and analysis of the archaeological features exposed.

9.3.2 Investigation of the features will be undertaken only as far as required to determine their date, form and function. The work will consist of half- or quarter-sectioning of features as required and, where appropriate, the removal of layers. Where appropriate, sections through linear features will be 1m wide.

9.3.3 Samples (up to 100lts) of topsoil, potential buried soils, and other sub-surface deposits will be hand-sorted to characterise their artefact content. In addition, a 100lt sample in each trench will be taken from the underlying brickearth, if present, to characterise the archaeological potential for artefacts and ecofacts of the Palaeolithic period.

9.3.4 A metal detector (no discrimination) will be used to aid finds recovery.

9.3.5 If appropriate, samples will be taken of deposits for the assessment of

environmental and economic evidence and/or industrial residues. Sampling will be in accordance with current best practice and guidance (eg, English Heritage 2001; 2011). Moreover,

9.3.6 The archaeological features encountered will be recorded on Archaeological Project Services pro-forma context record sheets. The system used is the single context method by which individual archaeological units of stratigraphy are assigned a unique record number and are individually described and drawn.

9.3.7 Plans of features will be drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at a scale of 1:10. Should individual features merit it, they will be drawn at a larger scale.

9.3.8 Throughout the duration of the trial trenching a photographic record consisting of black and white prints (reproduced as contact sheets) and colour digital images will be compiled. The photographic record will consist of:

- the site before the commencement of field operations.
- the site during work to show specific stages of work, and the layout of the archaeology within individual trenches.
- individual features and, where appropriate, their sections.
- groups of features where their relationship is important.
- the site on completion of field work

9.3.9 Should human remains be encountered, they will be left *in situ* with excavation being limited to the identification and recording of such remains. If removal of the remains is necessary, in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the evaluation, the appropriate Ministry of Justice licences will be obtained and the local environmental health department informed. If relevant, the coroner and the police will be notified. The archaeological curator will also be notified.

9.3.10 Finds collected during the fieldwork will be bagged and labelled according to the individual deposit from which they were recovered ready for later washing and analysis.

9.3.11 The spoil generated during the investigation will be mounded along the edges of the trial trenches with the topsoil being kept separate from the other material excavated for subsequent backfilling.

9.3.12 The precise location of the trenches within the site and the location of site recording grid will be established by a GPS and/or EDM survey.

10 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

10.1 If necessary, during the investigation specialist advice will be obtained from an environmental archaeologist. If necessary the specialist will visit the site and will prepare a report detailing the nature of the environmental material present on the site and its potential for additional analysis should further stages of archaeological work be required.

11 POST EXCAVATION

11.1 Stage 1

11.1.1 On completion of site operations, the records and schedules produced during the scheme of works will be checked and ordered to ensure that they form a uniform sequence forming a level II archive. A stratigraphic matrix of the archaeological deposits and features present on the site will be prepared. All photographic material will be catalogued and labelled, the labelling referring to schedules identifying the subject/s photographed.

11.1.2 All finds recovered during the field work will be washed, marked and packaged according to the deposit from which they were recovered. Any finds requiring specialist treatment and conservation will be sent to the Conservation Laboratory at the York Archaeological Trust.

11.2 Stage 2

11.2.1 Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix to enable the determination of the various phases of activity on the site.

11.2.2 Finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

11.2.3 Any samples taken will be sent to specialists for processing and assessment. Samples taken to characterise the Palaeolithic potential of the brickearths will be initially dry sieved followed by wet sieving before assessment by the relevant specialist.

11.3 Stage 3

11.3.1 On completion of stage 2, a report detailing the findings of the scheme of works will be prepared.

11.3.2 This will consist of:

- A non-technical summary of the results of the investigation.
- A description of the archaeological setting of the site drawing on the results of a HER search of the surrounding area.
- Description of the topography of the site.

- Description of the methodologies used during the investigation.
- A text describing the findings of the investigation, integrating the finds, economic, environmental and industrial evidence with the stratigraphic data.
- A consideration of the local, regional and national context of the findings.
- Plans of the archaeological features exposed. If a sequence of archaeological deposits is encountered, separate plans for each phase will be produced.
- Sections of the trenches and archaeological features.
- Interpretation of the archaeological features exposed, and their chronology and setting within the surrounding landscape.
- Specialist reports on the finds (artefacts, environmental, economic and industrial evidence) from the site.
- Appropriate photographs of the site and specific archaeological features.

12 REPORT DEPOSITION

12.1 An unbound draft copy of the report will be supplied initially to the North Hertfordshire District Council planning authority for comment. Copies of the final report will be sent to: the client and the Hertfordshire County Historic Environment Record.

13 ARCHIVE

13.1 The documentation, finds, photographs and other records and materials generated during the investigation will be sorted and ordered in accordance with the procedures in the Society of Museum Archaeologists' document *Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Museums* (1994), and *Hertfordshire Archaeological Archives Standard* (2017). This work will be undertaken by the Finds Supervisor, an Archaeological Assistant and the Conservator (if relevant). The archive will be deposited with the receiving museum as soon as possible after completion of the project, and within 12 months of that completion date.

13.2 The North Hertfordshire Museum has been contacted to obtain their agreement to receipt of the project archive and establish their requirements with regards to labelling, ordering, storage, conservation and organisation of the archive.

13.3 Upon completion and submission of the evaluation report, the landowner will be contacted to arrange legal transfer of title to the archaeological objects retained during the investigation from themselves to the receiving museum. The transfer of title will be effected by a standard letter supplied to the landowner for signature.

14 PUBLICATION

14.1 Details of the investigation will be input to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS).

14.2 If appropriate, notes on the findings will be submitted to the appropriate national and regional journals: *Britannia* for discoveries of Roman date; *Medieval Archaeology* for findings of medieval or later date.

15 CURATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

15.1 Curatorial responsibility for the project lies with Archaeological Curator for North Hertfordshire Council. As much notice as possible, ideally fourteen days, will be given in writing to the curator prior to the commencement of the project to enable them to make appropriate monitoring arrangements. However, the curator will be notified at least three days before the commencement of fieldwork.

16 VARIATIONS AND CONTINGENCIES

16.1 Variations to the proposed scheme of works will only be made following written confirmation of acceptance from the archaeological curator.

16.2 In the event of the discovery of any unexpected remains of archaeological importance, or of any changed circumstances, it is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to inform the archaeological curator.

16.3 Where important archaeological remains are discovered and deemed to merit further investigation additional resources may be required to provide an appropriate level of investigation, recording and analysis.

16.4 Any contingency requirement for additional fieldwork or post-excavation analysis outside the scope of the proposed scheme of works will only be activated following full consultation with the archaeological curator and the client.

17 PROGRAMME OF WORKS AND STAFFING LEVELS

17.1 It is expected that the fieldwork programme will last about 1 week.

17.2 An archaeological supervisor and assistant with an appropriate level of experience of such investigations will undertake the work.

17.3 Post-excavation analysis and report production will be undertaken by the supervisor, or a post-excavation analyst as appropriate, with assistance from a finds supervisor, illustrator and external specialists.

18 SPECIALISTS TO BE USED DURING THE PROJECT

18.1 The following organisations/persons will, in principle and if necessary, be used as

subcontractors to provide the relevant specialist work and reports in respect of any objects or material recovered during the investigation that require their expert knowledge and input. Engagement of any particular specialist subcontractor is also dependent on their availability and ability to meet programming requirements.

Task	Body to be undertaking the work
Conservation	York Archaeological Trust
Pottery Analysis	Prehistoric –S Percival, Independent Specialist Roman – R Perrin, Independent Specialist Post-Roman – A Irving, Independent Specialist
Non-pottery Artefacts	D Buckley, APS, G Taylor/J Cowgill, Independent Specialists
Animal Bones	J Rackham /M Holmes, independent specialist
Environmental Analysis	J Rackham/ V Fryer, Independent Specialists
Human Remains Analysis	Dr R Kendall, Independent Specialist

19 INSURANCES

19.1 Archaeological Project Services, as part of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, maintains Employers Liability Insurance of £10,000,000, together with Public and Products Liability insurances, each with indemnity of £5,000,000. Copies of insurance documentation can be supplied on request.

20 COPYRIGHT

20.1 Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.

20.2 Licence will also be given to the archaeological curators to use the documentary archive for educational, public and research purposes.

20.3 In the case of non-satisfactory settlement of account then copyright will remain fully and exclusively with Archaeological Project Services. In these circumstances it will be an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 for the client to pass any report, partial report, or copy of same, to any third party. Reports submitted in good faith by Archaeological Project Services to any Planning Authority or archaeological curator will be removed from said planning Authority and/or archaeological curator. The Planning Authority and/or archaeological curator will be notified by Archaeological

Project Services that the use of any such information previously supplied constitutes an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and may result in legal action.

20.4 The author of any report or specialist contribution to a report shall retain intellectual copyright of their work and may make use of their work for educational or research purposes or for further publication.

21 BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS, 1993 *Hitchin. Solid and drift edition*, 1:50 000 map sheet **221**

English Heritage, 2001 *Archaeometallurgy*, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines **01**

English Heritage, 2011 *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the Theory and Practice from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (2nd ed)

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.

Specification: Version 2, 13/06/2018

APPENDIX 1

Archaeological Project Services undertook a programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording and Trial Trench Evaluation on land at Legion House, Paynes Park, Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The work was undertaken between 20th and 23rd August 2018.

During the trial trench evaluation, a ditch was revealed in Trench 2, the northern of the two trenches. This appeared to correspond to the *burh* ditch which had been noted in previous nearby excavations.

Due to the nature of the trenches and the conditions on the site it was not possible to fully excavate the ditch during the trial trench evaluation.

The Historic Environment Advisor has recommended that a further stage of work be undertaken in order to fully excavate a section of the ditch.

A 4m x 4m area will be cleared around the ditch and, once exposed, a hand dug slot, not less than 1m in width will be excavated through the feature in order to fully record its profile and the deposits within.

This work will be undertaken by a suitably qualified archaeological supervisor and assistant and is expected to take 2 days. All procedures on-site and during post excavation analysis will be undertaken in accordance with those outlined in the original Written Scheme of Investigation dated 13th June 2018.

The results of this further stage of work will be produced in conjunction with the results of the previous phases of work.