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Development Control
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Contact Peri Horsley
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My ref P01/24/1691-1
Your ref 24/01691/FP
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Date: 30th October 2024

Dear Andrew,

Re: Erection of one self-build detached 6-bed dwelling including parking and landscaping and rebuilding of brick boundary wall.- Land North East Of Dower House, Hitchin Road, Preston, Hertfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting me on the above application and apologies for the late reply.

Please note that the following advice is based on the policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposed development lies just outside an Area of Archaeological Significance, as identified in the Local Plan. This covers the site of an area of medieval and post-medieval occupation to the east of the village of Preston.

A house of the Knights Templar was founded at Temple Dinsley before 1147. The property passed to the Knights Hospitallers in 1324, became a house of that order after 1338, and a preceptory in the reign of Richard II. Human remains and a chalice were discovered in the 1880s, when the kitchen and scullery block at the present house were built, perhaps indicating the position of the Templar chapel. An archaeological evaluation in 2002, on the development site, found unstratified medieval or early post-medieval building materials in the subsoil, suggesting that medieval features were disturbed when the school sports hall was built. The medieval preceptory (HER no. 2883) was pulled down in 1583 and a new house built immediately to the east of the present mansion. This 16th century house was demolished between 1815 and 1832. No evidence for it was found either in the 2002 evaluation or another evaluation incorporating geophysics that was carried out 150m to the south between 2000 and 2010. The present house that is formerly known as Princess Helena College was built in 1712 by Benedict Ithell, and both house and gardens were remodelled by E. L Lutyens and G. Jekyll in the early 20th century. The site itself is within a disused walled garden as part of the Grade II* registered park and garden at Temple Dinsley (HER 7341, Listing 1000919).

An archaeological desk-based assessment was submitted in support of the application (Abrams Archaeology 2024) and notes this proposed development “has a significant below ground element and the quantity of earthmoving is unusually high. In archaeological terms it is the creation of the lower ground floor and the slope down to it which will have the largest below ground impact”, with which this office agrees. Although the rebuilding of the brick boundary wall is unlikely to uncover any archaeology remains (as they are to reuse existing foundation trenches), the development of the residence and its landscaping is more likely to reveal archaeological remains, given the scope.

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, via trial trenching, of the development area, prior to the commencement of any development;
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;
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. 211, etc.) 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 required by the 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.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Peri Horsley
Historic Environment Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS
Environmental Sustainability

Hertfordshire LEADS provides Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology, Design and Sustainability support to planning departments in Hertfordshire.