

Tom Rea
Development Control
North Hertfordshire District Council

**Postal Point CHN 108
Hertfordshire County Council
Farnham House, Six Hills Way,
Stevenage, SG1 2FQ**

Contact Andy Instone
Tel 01992 555241
My ref P01/25/2791-1
Your ref **25/02791/FP**
historic.environment@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Date: 13 January 2026

Dear Tom,

Re: Erection of one 4-bedroom detached dwelling including bin store, parking, landscaping and reconfiguration of the existing public house car park and rear garden. Creation of vehicular access off Crab Tree Lane. | Motte And Bailey 1 Great Green Pirton Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 3QD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting us on the above application.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) notes that the site lies within the Pirton Conservation Area and in Area of Archaeological Significance 75 identified in the Local Plan. Further, the site borders the Scheduled Monument (SM10716) of Toot Hill Motte and Bailey Castle and Shrunken Medieval Settlement (HER13612). The eastern edge of the site borders the boundary of the Scheduled Monument; the site itself lies within the western bailey.

Pirton and its surroundings are richly populated with archaeological remains dating from the Iron Age to the medieval periods. The existing settlement recorded in the Domesday Survey as *Peritone* is of at least late Anglo-Saxon date. The village contains extensive remnants of the medieval settlement, including, the Motte and Bailey Castle itself, with at least two baileys; house platforms, a hollow way and at least 15 hectares of ridge and furrow field systems.

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (*HCUK Ltd*) submitted with this planning application notes the site has High Potential to contain archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric to modern periods (paragraph 6.3). It admits that the site is likely to be within the western bailey of the castle, and that archaeological test pitting has revealed medieval activity within the site (6.8). Furthermore, it concludes that the site appears to have remained undeveloped in the modern period (6.9).

Historic England have also commented on this proposal. They note:

“The application is not informed by an appropriate assessment of its heritage impact as NPPF 207 requires. The location of the site within the castle's western bailey, as well as

the potential for archaeological remains of equivalent significance to the scheduled monument has not been explored in the application and I cannot agree with the conclusions of the submitted HIA.

I recommend that the HIA be updated to accurately reflect the location of the site within the bailey and then to discuss the significant implications of that in terms of the level of heritage harm and the application's response to it.

These steps are necessary to allow the LPA to understand and balance heritage harm in any NPPF-compliant decision.

You may also wish to discuss the appropriateness of pre-determination archaeological evaluation of the site with your planning archaeology advisers.”

Recommendations

We would therefore recommend that - in accordance with NPPF para. 207, 208, fn 75 – the following investigation should be undertaken to describe the type, scale, and quality of heritage assets likely to be affected by the proposal:

- An archaeological trial trench evaluation

Informed advice can then be provided to the Planning Authority with reference to the impact of the development proposal on the historic environment.

We 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.

CC Adam Single, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England