



Peter Bull
Development Control
North Hertfordshire District Council

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

Contact Peri Horsley
Tel 01992 555276
My ref P01/24/1604-1
Your ref 24/01604/FP
historic.environment@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Date: 28th October 2024

Dear Peter,

Re: Change of use of the Former Princess Helena College and associated land from a former all-girls boarding school to 69no. private residential dwellings (Use Class C3), including the conversion of the main Grade II* Listed House to 35no. new apartments, the conversion of the retained Teaching Block to provide 8 new apartments, the demolition of the existing sports hall building and science block and replacement with 20no. new houses and 2no. new apartments, the conversion of the Tank House and the Pump House buildings to provide 2no. detached dwellings and the erection of 2no. new dwellings located within the summerhouse plantation. The provision of a new car-park together with domestic storage units and covered parking bays to include solar PV Panels, and waste storage units and the provision of new driveways and associated works. Erection of new sub-station building and plant room. In addition, the associated landscaping of the site including provision of new pathways and gates and the reinstatement of Grade II* Listed Parks and Gardens and the provision of a new Cricket Pitch and associated Cricket Pavilion.- Temple Dinsley, (formerly The Princess Helena College), School Lane, Preston, Hertfordshire, SG4 7RT

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 within 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 building and gardens are both Grade II* Listed.

An archaeological desk-based assessment was submitted in support of the application (Britannia Archaeology Ltd 2024) and found that the potential for archaeological remains specifically dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods is considered to be high, which our office agrees with. We also believe that any alterations to the Old House may cause a significant impact to the character of the historic fabric and should be recorded in its current state prior to development. A Historic Building Recording also submitted in support of the application (John Selby Heritage Consultancy 2024) provided a Level 3 detailed recording of the buildings at Temple Dinsley, including a temporal phasing of the buildings extant today. The Historic Building Recording is thorough in its detailing of the site; however it is still possible for additional information on the building's history to be uncovered during the alterations and conversion proposed in this application.

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 of archaeological interest and 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, including the footprint of any new buildings and dwellings or prior to the commencement of any development, including grubbing out of foundations of demolished buildings;
2. the archaeological monitoring of all groundworks related to the development, including foundation trenches, service trenches, hard landscaping, road and path construction, building works compounds and vehicle tracking routes and all other ground impact, including a contingency for the preservation or further excavation of any remains encountered;
3. such appropriate mitigation measures indicated as necessary by that evaluation and archaeological monitoring of groundworks. 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. archaeological Level 3 building recording of all interventions to the fabric of the buildings in areas where such works might reveal information relating to the development of the buildings, and for the purpose of recording any original historic features (etc.) that may be exposed during the course of the development;
5. 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;
6. 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,

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk

Peri Horsley
Historic Environment Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS
Environmental Sustainability

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