

Dear Ms Reynard,

I am writing to you on behalf of the North Hertfordshire Archaeological Society to OBJECT to this application. Our reason is that we consider the known archaeology of this field to be of national importance which should be preserved from development. I attach documents which explain and evidence why we think this, including one showing the location of our test pits in relation to the geophysical (magnetometry) survey.

The site is covered in highly significant archaeological remains of the prehistoric, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods. These include Roman ditched enclosures, one of which on the west side of the site may well be enclosing a Roman temple overlooking Ashwell Springs, evidence for which includes the finding of a silver-gilt Roman priest's ritual rattle handle, currently the subject of a Treasure Inquest; post-holes of timber buildings which may be Roman or Saxon; a deep hollow containing early Saxon pottery, bone pins and needles, etc. which may be either a ritual ceremonial hollow or a *grubenhaus* (sunken-featured building – timber building with a shallow cellar). I believe it to be the former, but if the latter the finds in it may suggest ritual closure by votive offerings at the end of its life. Moreover, the geophysical survey indicates that there are other such features nearby on that west side of the site which have not been investigated either by this Society's test pitting or by the Mola trial trenching.

You may see from the attached documents that my interpretation of the archaeology of the site is profoundly different from Mola's. You will see from the attachments that Mola is mistaken to write that there are no finds from the site to support my interpretation. I did offer to share the NHAS site archive with Mola, but they did not take up the offer.

As the Society believes this site to be of national importance we are applying to Historic England to have it Scheduled as a Monument of National Importance. At the very least, we believe that the area where the Saxon hollow within the double-ditched Roman (possible temple) enclosure is located should be preserved as a public green open space. This could be achieved by altering the layout of dwellings.

If you require any further documents, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Gilbert Burleigh BA, AMA, MCIfA, FSA
Hon. Field Officer
North Hertfordshire Archaeological Society