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Development Management
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Date: 29th May 2025

Dear Steve,

Re: Outline planning application for development of up to 600 dwellings (C3), elderly accommodation (C3), Mixed Use Local Centre (including flexible use E, F and Sui Generis), First School, informal and formal open space, associated works and infrastructure including a new access from the A507 and pedestrian bridge over the A10, with all matters reserved except access. - Land North Of A507, West Of A10 Buntingford

RE-CONSULTATION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for re-consulting this office on the above application.

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

In our initial comments on this planning application (correspondence dated 26th November 2024), we advised that *'In this instance, given its size and the widespread occurrence of archaeological sites of multi-period dates in the vicinity, the proposed development site should be regarded as having the potential to contain (undesigned) heritage assets with archaeological interest, and the proposed development has the potential to have a major adverse effect on any such currently unknown archaeological remains.'*

Therefore, in line with NPPF para 200 (now para 213), we recommended that a report on the results of a geophysical survey of the site, and a report on an archaeological trial trench evaluation of the site, should be submitted in support of this application to develop the site.

The applicant has now submitted a report on a geophysical survey carried out in November 2024 (Headland Archaeology, *Land North of the A507 and West of A10, Buntingford, East Hertfordshire, Geophysical Survey Report*, November 2024). A plan (Archaeology Geophysical Overlay Plan-2) has also been submitted that overlays the geophysical survey results on the development proposed land use.

The geophysical survey has identified two areas of probable archaeological settlement activity (AAA1 North and AAA1 South), in the north and on the south-eastern boundary of the site (AAA2). In the north two groupings of irregular shaped enclosures with associated ditches are present, and a ring ditch 17m in diameter has been identified within the larger grouping of enclosures. The archaeological features could extend to the east, towards the A10, where a spread of magnetic disturbance considered of likely modern origin (MD1) could be masking associated anomalies of archaeological potential. The survey also recorded a large curvilinear enclosure with internal sub-divisions on the south-eastern edge of the site, close to Buntingford Business Park.

We therefore recommend that further archaeological field evaluation of the site should be undertaken, via a programme of intrusive archaeological trial trenching, prior to determination of the application.

This would be at a sufficiently high percentage sample in AAA1 North, AAA1 South, and AAS2, to establish the type, scale, significance and quality of heritage assets likely to be affected by the proposal. This approach would also apply to the area of magnetic disturbance MD1, to establish whether or not any activity associated with AAA1 South is present. The remainder of the site can be evaluated at a lesser percentage sample, but sufficient to ground truth the geophysical survey results.

This is to ensure this Office has sufficient information regarding the potential impact of the proposed development upon the historic environment to enable informed advice to be provided to the LPA.

In this context, it should be noted that the design of the development is not fixed, and therefore no part of the site can be entirely excluded from this evaluation (see Planning Statement Executive Summary - 'with matters such as layout and design reserved for future discussion and agreement, ...' and para 3.2.2. – '*Whilst the layout of the proposed development is a Reserved Matter, the submitted Illustrative Masterplan shows one way in which the quantum of development proposed could be accommodated on the site.*').

It should also be noted that the results of these archaeological investigations may have an impact on the design, extent and density of development should high significance heritage assets be found.

We recommend that the archaeological trial trench evaluation is carried out in line with a written scheme of investigation that has been approved by this office. This office would be happy to discuss the scope of the works further with the applicant or the applicant's agent/archaeological consultant.

I hope that you will be able to accommodate the above recommendations.

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

Yours sincerely,

Alison Tinniswood
Senior Historic Environment Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS
Environmental Sustainability

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