Growth and Environment
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Date: 29th May 2025

Nikki Dawney
Development Management
East Herts Council

Dear Nikki,

Re. Outline planning application for development of employment land (flexible use B2, B8, E(c) and E(g)), informal open space, associated works and infrastructure including a new access from A507, with all matters reserved except for access.- Land South Of A507, West Of A10 Buntingford

RE-CONSULTATION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for re-consulting us on the above application.

In our initial comments on the development proposal (correspondence dated 18th July 2024), we advised that the proposed development site should be regarded as having the potential to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest (NPPF para 200 – now para 213), and that information about the significance of buried archaeology that may be present within the proposed development area, and the impact of any development, was not yet available.

We therefore advised that an archaeological field evaluation of the site should be undertaken, as follows:

The archaeological evaluation should comprise geophysical survey and a programme of intrusive archaeological trial trenching, in order to provide sufficient information about the significance of heritage assets that may be affected by the development. This work should be carried out prior to determination of the application.

The results of these evaluations would determine whether any further archaeological work would be deemed necessary, either prior to the determination of the application, or following planning consent, should such consent be granted. Should the evaluation identify non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, these should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets (NPPF para 206, fn 72, now para 213, fn 75*).*

The applicant has now submitted a report on a geophysical survey of the site, which was carried out in November 2024 (Sumo Geosurveys, *Geophysical Survey report. Land South of the A507, West of Buntingford – Area 3*, November 2024). A plan (PN4006 Southern Application Overlay) has also been submitted that overlays the geophysical survey results on the development proposed land use.

The survey has identified significant and widespread below ground archaeological remains. These comprise a complex of probable later prehistoric or Romano-British settlement activity, predominantly in the western half of the proposed development site, and covering some *c.* 4.7 hectares. The complex includes rectilinear enclosures with internal features including smaller enclosures, ring ditches and pits, and areas of probable small-scale industrial activity, such as kilns. The survey results also indicate that archaeological remains may be present in the eastern part of the site, to a lesser degree.

We therefore advise 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 is in order that 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 (c.f. Planning Statement Executive Summary - ' *with matters such as layout and design reserved for future discussion and agree*ment, …' 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.