

PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL
Tracy Harvey – Head of Planning & Building Control

Our Ref: 5/2017/1126
Your Ref: 6/2017/0624/MAJ
Please ask for: Sarah Ashton
Direct Line: 01727 814637
E-mail: Sarah.Ashton@stalbans.gov.uk
Date: 25 May 2017

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Development Management
Council Offices
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6AE

F.A.O. Mr D Elmore

Dear Sir,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Consultation by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Proposal: Erection of a 3 storey building for B8 (storage and distribution) (4,878 sq metres) and B1 (office/light industrial) (1,550 sq metres) use, together with 100 car parking spaces, 10 cycle parking spaces, boundary treatment, landscaping, lighting and access.

At: Plot 5000 Hatfield Business Park Hatfield AL10 9EZ

I refer to your letter dated 13 April 2017 concerning the application referred to above. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you regarding this matter.

I would advise you that St Albans City & District Planning Authority has no comment on the planning application.

It is, however, requested that matters raised by the District Archaeologist (attached) are dealt with by way of a pre-commencement submission condition.

Yours sincerely



Tracy Harvey
Head of Planning and Building Control

INTERNAL CONSULTATION

FROM: Archaeology - Simon West	TO: Sarah Ashton
PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 5/17/1126	DATE: 27 April 2017
DETAILS: Erection of a 3 storey building for B8 (storage and distribution) (4,878 sq. metres) and B1 (office/light industrial) (1,550 sq. metres) use, together with...	
ADDRESS: Plots 5000, Hatfield Business Park, Hatfield	

RECOMMENDATION

Approval with an archaeological recording condition

ADVICE/COMMENTS

The application is not in a nationally or locally designated archaeological area as far as is demonstrated by St Albans District Council information, but this information ceases on the boundary of the District. However, previous archaeological work on this, and the adjacent property of Oaklands College, has produced positive results for buried archaeology including artefact scatters and ditches (refs. 1-10 below). There are also indications of significant heritage in this site on Plot 5600, and nearby on Plot 6020 (ref. 11 below). These findings suggest that there is archaeological interest in the current proposal, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (Annex 2).

The character of the near surface and topsoil archaeology suggests a low density scatter of features and finds from the prehistoric to the modern period with, to date, areas of focus rather than identifiable 'sites'. However, there is always the potential to recover a 'site'. A number of projects cover this characterisation:

- 1.) An archaeological evaluation at the end of 1996, undertaken by the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust, comprising field walking and trial trenching, at Suttons Farm (TL 1920 1000). This resulted in the uncovering of a widespread scatter of prehistoric material, including Neolithic/Bronze Age flints, a Late Iron Age/Early Roman site, as well as a scatter of medieval pottery and ceramic building material.
- 2.) In March 1999, the Cotswold Archaeological Trust undertook the Hatfield Business Park Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment (C.A.T. Report 991015). Various areas of significance were defined including Area 7 (cropmark HHER (SMR) 2666 Oaklands College Roman enclosure), to the east.
- 3.) An aerial photographic survey, in August 1997, south-west of Coursers Farm (TL 2004) identified four areas of archaeological or possible archaeological significance. These were mounds, a crop mark, linear ditches and a system of parallel linear and sinuous ditches, as well as less well-defined features within and around the site.
- 4.) In 1998, at Oaklands College, Hatfield Road, Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service on behalf of The Guildhouse Consultancy (Report 1998/01; see plan, area of survey outlined in green) undertook an evaluation. This work uncovered four areas of interest. Chronologically there were: two Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age activity areas (Areas 2 and 4), a Romano-British enclosure (Area 3) and medieval boundary, and general Romano-British activity (Area 1).
- 5.) A second evaluation at Oaklands (Milbank and Weale 2007) identified a number of ditches, gullies, pits, postholes, all of which were undated.
- 6.) A third phase of evaluation at Oaklands (Albion Archaeology 2009) was undertaken, which produced largely negative results.
- 7.) A fourth evaluation at Oaklands carried out in June 2011 (Taylor 2011) found ephemeral linear features and a pit tentatively given a Bronze Age date in the western section of the development area. Trenches in the eastern section revealed no archaeology. The shallowness of the topsoil and presence of plough scars suggest that the site has been heavily truncated over the years.

- 8.) A watching brief at Oaklands (Porter, 2011) was carried out during the groundworks associated with the construction and drainage for new sports fields. No archaeology was observed.
- 9.) In 2012 a small area of the Oaklands College grounds, in the centre of the complex, underwent an evaluation by Thames Valley Archaeological Services. The evaluation has not revealed any deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest. Several trenches revealed extensive areas of modern truncation and relatively modern made ground was encountered in all trenches resting directly on top of the natural geology.
- 10.) In 2016 trial trenching on the current site of the aerodrome to the west, ahead of a potential quarry also produced limited evidence in two areas, a ditch containing Roman pottery and another ditch with earlier, possible Iron Age pottery.
- 11.) The archaeological potential of Plot 6020 site has been determined to be moderate for evidence of low-density prehistoric activity dating to the late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age and for Saxon remains. The Plot 5600 site produced evidence of intensive activity dating to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age. Several groups of postholes and pits were found to contain later prehistoric worked flint and pottery (MOLA, 2013). Other late prehistoric features in the vicinity of the plot 6020 site, for example those on the University Bus Garage site (MOLA, 2002) and the Residential Development site, Hatfield Aerodrome (MOLA, 2004). A group of early medieval (Saxon) probable quarry pits were recorded on plot 5600 in one area of the site. Evidence for later medieval activity on the site was limited to just four postholes in the north of Plot 5600. Three of these are amongst several other, undated postholes, which may have been medieval (MOLA, 2016).

The current proposal also needs to take into account results from the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). Artefacts, dating from the Palaeolithic to the modern period, were recovered by an independent metal detectorist on the Oaklands site. The finds were probably recovered from spoil heaps derived from evaluation trenches at the centre of the built area of the College. In particular, artefacts from the Roman and later eras were unearthed, including a potentially significant seventh century Byzantine coin (West, S. forthcoming. A coin from Colney Heath and links to the Byzantine Empire. *Hertfordshire Archaeology and History*. Volume 17). Although the artefacts are generally abraded, they may suggest nearby activity; the presence of a Byzantine coin could have significant implications for the post-Roman period. These results may not yet have been incorporated into the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record. The site requires careful consideration given the scatters of features and finds already recovered.

In light of the above, the following is required as a first stage in potentially a comprehensive systematic stratified sampling strategy for the recording and potential preservation of any significant archaeological resource:

- A Heritage Statement with impact assessment. This should minimally cover the points above and should include an assessment of the deposits likely to be encountered, including for their potential environmental significance.
- A field evaluation is also required before development commences to characterise the later surface archaeology and should comprise an evaluation. This should cover areas under development threat, to assess below ground archaeology as well as artefacts contained in the topsoil. Reference should be made to the previous projects for reference as to the likely character of the archaeological resource so that appropriate strategies may be devised.
- Where an evaluation has already taken place and following the evaluation of new areas, should an archaeological mitigation strategy be required, this should take place.
- Any such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological interests of the site, at this stage.

The request for the above is designed to target areas of potential loss and minimise work in areas that are due to be preserved, or have been proven not to contain archaeology and/or significant environmental evidence. The aim of the evaluation is to specifically assess the potential for buried archaeological deposits, features and finds. There is the potential for significant archaeology and this would potentially have a constraint impact on the development, if preservation *in situ* is required, or indeed, if further work is needed. The above should create a basis for characterising and defining the archaeological resource so that appropriate mitigation strategies can be formulated.

CONDITION

Archaeological Investigation

No development shall take place until a written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For land that is included within the WSI, no development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI. The WSI must include a statement of significance and research objectives and:

- a.) A programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works.
- b.) A programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication and dissemination and deposition of resulting material. **This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI**

Reason

To ensure adequate opportunity is provided for archaeological research on this historically important site. To enable the inspection of the site by qualified persons for the investigation of archaeological remains in accordance with a written scheme of investigation in accordance with Policy R29 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the National Planning Policy Framework. To ensure the appropriate identification, recording and publication of archaeological and historic remains affected by the development

Bibliography

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- BCAS 1998, *Oaklands College, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Field Evaluation*, Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service, Bedford.
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- Milbank, D and Weal, A, 2007, *Smallford Campus, Oaklands College, St Albans, Hertfordshire, an archaeological evaluation*, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 04/82a/2.
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- MOLA, 2015, *Post Excavation Assessment Plot 5600*, MOLA unpub report
- MOLA, 2015, *Historic Environment Assessment*, MOLA unpub report
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- Porter, S, 2011, *Oaklands College, St Albans, Hertfordshire, an archaeological watching brief*, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 11/52b.
- Taylor, A, 2011, *Oaklands College, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, an archaeological evaluation*, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 11/52a.