

Ms Clare Howe
Planning
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

**Postal Point CHN 108
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HERTFORD SG13 8DN**

Contact Simon Wood
Tel 01992 588039
My ref P06/21/0671
Your ref 6/2021/0671/MAJ
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Date: 29 April 2021

Dear Clare,

Re: Erection of 317 dwellings (Class C3) with associated access, parking, landscaping and other supporting infrastructure, and outline planning for up to 404 dwellings (Class C3) with all matters reserved for access. - South Side Former Shredded Wheat Factory Broadwater Road Welwyn Garden City

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting me on the above application.

This office commented on several past schemes for redevelopment of the former Shredded Wheat Factory and surrounding area (e.g. N6/2015/0294/PP and 6/2018/0171/MAJ). On each occasion we recommended that archaeological conditions be placed on consent.

The proposed Wheat Quarter development will involve large-scale ground disturbance over an extensive area within the centre of Welwyn Garden City. During the construction of the Garden City, and subsequently, many archaeological finds were made, despite the lack of specialised archaeological work carried out at the time. The quantity of these finds is sufficient to demonstrate that this area was occupied in the Late Iron Age and/or Romano-British period, and that archaeological remains of that date do survive in the area.

The site lies circa 250m east of the closest Area of Archaeological Significance, an area of Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British occupation in the vicinity of Church Road (HER no. 199), discovered during the digging of a sewer trench for the Free Church Hall in 1928. A further area of Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British settlement (HER nos. 858 & 2808) lies near Shortlands Green and Salisbury Gardens, approximately 500m to the east of the proposed development site, discovered in 1954.

The development area has been subject to large-scale earth movement and the foundations of the existing and former industrial buildings on site are likely to have had a detrimental effect on any archaeology that may have been present. Significant archaeological remains are known to survive under large buildings in Hertfordshire, however, such as at GlaxoSmithKline in Ware, or Bircherley Green shopping centre in Hertford. There is a reasonable likelihood that archaeological remains may survive on site.

With the above in mind, 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 with archaeological interest. I recommend that the following provisions be made, should you be minded to grant consent:

1. The evaluation, via trial trenching, of the development area prior to the commencement of any new development but post demolition of the existing structures on site.
2. Such appropriate mitigation measures indicated as necessary by that evaluation. These may include:
 - a) the preservation of any archaeological remains *in situ*, if warranted;
 - b) the appropriate archaeological excavation of any remains before any development commences on the site, with provisions for subsequent analysis and publication of results;
 - c) the archaeological monitoring and recording of the ground works of the development, including foundations, services, landscaping, access, etc. (and also including a contingency for the preservation or further investigation of any remains then encountered);
3. The analysis of the results of the archaeological work, with provisions for the subsequent production of a report and an archive, and the publication of the results, as appropriate.
4. Such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological 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.199, etc.) of the National Planning Policy Framework. and the guidance contained in Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 (2015).

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 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 for post investigation assessment;
3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording;
4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation;
5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation;
6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.

B The 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,

Dr Simon Wood FSA Scot
Historic Environment Advisor
Environmental Resource Planning