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Date
27th October 2022

Our Reference: AR WD22 1637 Land at Downlands Fm, Uckfield
For the attention of: Claire Turner

Dear Mr Robins

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION

WD/2022/1637/MEA LAND AT DOWNLANDS FARM, UCKFIELD. HYBRID PLANNING APPLICATION COMPRISING: OUTLINE APPLICATION (WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT FOR ACCESS) FOR THE ERECTION OF UP TO 424 NO. RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, THE PROVISION OF VEHICULAR, PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS AND SEPARATE EMERGENCY ACCESS FROM THE UCKFIELD BYPASS (A22), PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS FROM SNATTS ROAD, OPEN SPACES INCLUDING CHILDREN'S PLAY SPACE, SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND EARTHWORKS; AND FULL APPLICATION COMPRISING CREATION OF A STRATEGIC SANG, ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND CAR PARKING, AND DEMOLITION OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY AND OTHER BUILDINGS AND PROVISION OF PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS FROM ROCKS ROAD, ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND EARTHWORKS.

Recommend for approval in principle subject to the imposition of conditions	The information provided is satisfactory and identifies that there is a risk that archaeological remains will be damaged. Nonetheless it is acceptable that the risk of damage to archaeology is mitigated by the application of planning conditions which are outlined in this response.	**YES**

If the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant planning permission, we consider that consideration should be made to preserve in-situ archaeological remains through a sympathetic design, and we ask that the following conditions be applied:

[ARCH 1] No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

[ARCH 3] No phase of the development hereby permitted shall be brought into use until the archaeological site investigation and post - investigation assessment (including provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition) for that phase has been completed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological site investigation and post - investigation assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the programme set out in the written scheme of investigation approved under condition **[ARCH 1]**

[ARCH 4] Prior to the commencement of development and subsequent to an approved archaeological site investigation [ARCH 1 and ARCH 3] a construction method statement to show the preservation in-situ of significant archaeological remains shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological and historical interest of the site is safeguarded and recorded to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework

Relevant National Planning Policy

195. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

203. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Detailed Comments:

The proposed development is of archaeological interest due to its location in a landscape with ample evidence for activity from the prehistoric period onwards. Evidence for earlier prehistoric activity in the wider environs of the proposal site include a Mesolithic rock shelter site., whilst evidence for later prehistoric and Romano-British activity in the area includes possible Bronze and Iron Age field systems, and Late Iron Age and/or Romano-British settlement. There is extensive evidence for medieval settlement and agricultural activity in the wider environs of the site, including a potential moated site and a number of medieval farmsteads (including Downlands Farm itself), along with some evidence for iron working in the form of bloomeries and forges. This

pattern of an essentially agricultural landscape of fields, interspersed with farmsteads continued into the post-medieval period, albeit accompanied by an intensification in settlement during the course of the period.

To date, the only archaeological investigation within the proposal site itself consists of a geophysical survey, the results of which were submitted as part of this current application. This identified a number of anomalies across the site, although with the exception of several former field boundaries, the archaeological origin of the majority remains uncertain and would require testing through archaeological excavation to categorically determine their date and form.

Unfortunately, although this current application is accompanied by a comprehensive archaeological desk-based assessment, we do not necessarily concur with its conclusions - that the site generally has a low potential, or may only contain features of low importance, for all archaeological periods. Rather, it is our view that this perceived low potential reflects a lack of prior archaeological investigation, and the actual potential of the site to contain buried archaeological remains might be better described as unknown or undetermined.

In the light of the potential for impacts to heritage assets with archaeological interest resulting from the proposed development, the area affected by the proposals should be the subject to further archaeological assessment defined by a ***programme of archaeological works*** and the results used to inform a sympathetic design enabling the retention in-situ of the archaeological remains within the development.

In furtherance of this recommendation, we shall be available to advise the applicant on how they can best fulfill any archaeological condition that is applied to their planning permission and to provide a brief setting out the scope of the programme of works.

The ***written scheme of investigation***, referred to in the recommended condition wording above, will set out the contracted archaeologist's detailed approach to undertake the programme of works and accord with the relevant sections of the Sussex Archaeological Standards (2019).

Perhaps you could send us a copy of the planning decision once it has been made? In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us again if you need further information or advice.

Yours sincerely

Diccon Hart

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