

Stacey Robins
Development & Building Control
Wealden District Council
Vicarage Lane
Hailsham, East Sussex
BN27 2AX

Date
2nd March 2023

Our Reference: AR WD22 3222 Land south of A271 and east of A22
For the attention of: Claire Turner

Dear Mr Robins

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION

WD/2022/3222/MAO LAND TO THE SOUTH OF THE A271 AND EAST OF THE A22, LOWER HORSEBRIDGE, HAILSHAM. DEVELOPMENT OF UP TO 124 NO. RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS, ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE (INCLUDING A NEW ACCESS JUNCTION ONTO THE A271) AND OPEN SPACE.

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
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If the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant planning permission, then we ask that the following condition 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]

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

205. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

Detailed Comments:

The proposed development is of archaeological interest due to its location within a landscape with evidence of past human activity from the prehistoric period onwards. Scatters of Mesolithic and/or Neolithic struck flint in the vicinity of the site attest to at least transient activity of this date in the locale of the site, most likely representative of seasonal activity by mobile communities exploiting the resources of the High Weald. Rather better evidence for Late Iron Age/Early Roman and medieval activity has been forthcoming from archaeological excavations to the south-east of the site in the form of a number of ditches, pits and postholes generally considered to be consistent with agricultural activity but indicative of nearby settlement.

A *desk-based heritage assessment* submitted as part of this application (Terence O'Rourke report ref 231703C) has considered the archaeological evidence in the vicinity of the site in some detail, although we do not necessarily concur with some of its conclusions. Specifically, we do not agree with the thesis that the site has low to negligible potential for remains of prehistoric and Roman date to be present. The site's topographic position, overlooking a stream which runs to the south-east, may well have proved attractive to Mesolithic and/or Neolithic communities operating in the area, and there is clear evidence for Iron Age/Early Roman field systems to the south-east of the site, with suggestion of nearby settlement, the location of which remains to be determined.

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 of a ***programme of archaeological works***. This will enable any archaeological deposits and features that would be disturbed by the proposed works, to be either preserved *in situ* or, where this cannot be achieved, adequately recorded in advance of their loss. These recommendations are in line with the requirements given in the **NPPF** (the Government's planning policies for England):

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).

Could you please 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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