

INTERNAL CONSULTATION

FROM: Archaeology - Simon West	TO: Sarah Smith
PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 5/20/3022	DATE: 12 March 2021
DETAILS: Demolition of all existing buildings, structures and hardstanding and redevelopment of the site to provide a new retirement community comprising 80 assisted living apartments with community facilities and 44 bungalows together with associated access	
ADDRESS: Land to Rear of Burston Garden Centre, North Orbital Road, Chiswell Green St Albans	

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with archaeological conditions

ADVICE/COMMENTS

The application is in a locally defined area of archaeological significance AS.R. 32 (Burston Manor; medieval manor and deserted village; Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER) MHT10353 and MHT10352 Cropmarks Burston Nurseries). This area is a site where planning permissions may be subject to an archaeological recording condition, as designated in the St Albans District Local Plan Review (1994).

The application is accompanied by a Built Heritage Statement (RPS Group, JCH01200, Land to rear of Burston Garden Centre, St Albans, Hertfordshire: v.4, 11 December 2020) and an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (DBA: JAC23515 ; Land to the rear of Burston Garden Centre, St Albans: Version 2 Final December 2020). This is good practice and conforms to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. However, there has been no below ground intrusive evaluation to determine the nature, extent, character and significance of the archaeological potential as identified and suggested during pre-application consultations. This makes the development vulnerable to uncovering significant buried archaeology with concomitant time and cost uncertainties. Should regionally or nationally significant archaeology be uncovered, there may be a requirement to preserve *in situ*.

Close to the application there are numerous Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record entries (e.g. HHER 6620 site of pillbox: the supposed line of a Roman Road MHT4579 and Tenterden House MHT17831). Within approximately 200m additional entries are sited (HHER 8896, 10350, 10351 cropmarks; 1003 supposed shrunken village and 4652 Manor House). These cropmarks could relate to the shrunken medieval village, or equally, are part of an earlier Late Iron Age and/or Roman period landscape that may continue into the area of the application. Recent work associated with the M25 widening uncovered a large late prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval landscape immediately to the south of the M25. This comprised several phases of field boundary ditches which were running towards the current application. A limited area of medieval occupation and perhaps most significantly, Late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery kilns were present on site. Recent work around Holt Farm 1km to the west uncovered indications for landscape use dating from the Palaeolithic (including two hand axes) through to the medieval period. Therefore, there is the potential to uncover Pleistocene and earlier Holocene deposits which may contain evidence for early man. The later medieval period is possibly characterised by a shrunken village around the farm.

The DBA states that "...the study site is considered to have a high archaeological potential for the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods and a low to moderate potential for the Roman period". (DBA, 6.3, pp.20). It further states that "...given the high archaeological potential of the study site, development at the study site

would have the potential to impact upon archaeological remains of probable local and perhaps regional significance.” (DBA, 6.5, pp.20).

Therefore, there is a need to fully evaluate the site to establish the nature, extent, date and state of preservation of any surviving archaeological remains that may be affected by the development. The evaluation may include a geophysical survey and archaeological trial trenching, possibly as part of a systematic stratified project. Such work will provide evidence on which an informed decision can be made concerning the further need for, and scope of, an appropriate mitigation strategy. If the latter, there may be a requirement for full excavation on site or even preservation *in situ*, should the results warrant it.

CONDITIONS

1.) Archaeological Investigation

No development-related works shall take place within the site until a written scheme of archaeological work (WSI) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall include on-site work, and off-site work such as the analysis, publication, and archiving of the results, together with a timetable for completion of each element. All works shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the approved scheme, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This must be carried out by a professional archaeological/building recording consultant or organisation in accordance with the agreed written scheme of investigation.

Reason:

To ensure adequate opportunity is provided for archaeological research on this historically important site. To comply with Policy 111 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 and the National Planning Policy Framework. To ensure the appropriate identification, recording and publication of archaeological and historic remains affected by the development.

2.) Post Excavation Assessment, Analysis, Publication and Archiving

Following the completion of the fieldwork, formal provision for the post investigation assessment shall be put in place. This assessment will be in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Condition 1. Provision will be demonstrated and confirmed in writing with the LPA for the analysis and publication of the site archive, if appropriate. This will include all necessary works up to and including an appropriate publication and will include an agreed timetable and location for that publication. Should these provisions not be required, formal agreement will be sought and shall be agreed in writing with the LPA

Reason:

To ensure adequate opportunity is provided for archaeological research on this historically important site. To comply with Policy 111 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 and the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 141). To ensure the appropriate identification, recording and publication of archaeological and historic remains affected by the development.

Condition Requested