

MEMO

**North
Lincolnshire
Council**

TO: TANYA COGGON, DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
FROM: ALISON WILLIAMS, HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD
REF: PA/2021/1755
DATE: 17/11/2021

SUBJECT: Planning permission to erect 14 dwellings and improvements to vehicular access, land off Main Street, Sturton

PARISH: SCAWBY

SUMMARY OF ADVICE

- The application site is within an area of archaeological interest close to the site of Sturton Roman villa and prehistoric landscape features
- Accordingly, the applicant commissioned an archaeological evaluation to assess the significance of any buried remains within the application site
- The archaeological field evaluation comprised an initial geophysical survey followed by a programme of trial trenching to confirm the results
- The evaluation identified archaeological remains at the north end of the site comprising two field ditches of probable medieval date
- The HER has no objection to the current proposals but advises mitigation to offset the harm to any associated archaeological remains
- Mitigation should comprise a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording to be undertaken during the construction groundworks within Plot 1 and the adjacent access road
- This mitigation strategy should be set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and submitted prior to determination of the planning application
- Where the planning authority is minded to grant consent, any permission should be subject to conditions securing the implementation of an agreed WSI; pre-commencement conditions would only be necessary where a Mitigation Strategy and WSI is not in place.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (HER) FUNCTION: To hold, maintain, interpret and manage heritage information, enhancing the understanding of the area's historical development as a distinctive and attractive place. HER information provides source material for interpretation by heritage professionals and for use by community groups and individuals. The HER database is updated as new information about the historic environment is discovered.

The HER also provides advice on development proposals that affect, or may affect, the sites and settings of all heritage assets i.e. designated and non-designated historic buildings, archaeological sites and monuments, and historic places, areas and landscapes. This advice is provided against saved local plan policies and national historic environment policies. See <https://www.northlincs.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/historic-environment-and-conservation/>

DETAILED ADVICE: Thank you for consulting the HER on this application.

The applicant consulted the HER to inform the preparation of their planning application. Following our advice they commissioned an archaeological field evaluation comprising geophysical survey followed by a programme of archaeological trial trench excavation and invited the HER to monitor each stage of the investigations. The applicant has submitted the results of the Archaeological Evaluation with this planning application. This information is sufficient to describe the significance of the heritage assets that the development has the potential to impact, and for the planning authority to consider in their decision making.

HERITAGE POLICY

Paragraphs 194 & 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) require an applicant to submit sufficient information about the significance of any heritage assets that their proposals may affect that allows the local planning authority to assess the degree of impact on heritage assets and their settings, and how this impact may be mitigated, if at all; paragraph 194 states that consultation of the HER is a requirement of this assessment process.

Effects of an application on non-designated heritage assets are a material consideration and local planning authorities are directed to have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset when judging the planning balance (NPPF 203).

Where loss of heritage assets as a result of development is considered justified, paragraph 205 of the NPPF states that the *'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 [within the Historic Environment Record]'*. This procedure also accords with saved Local Plan policy HE9.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Our records show that the application site is located close to the site of Sturton Roman villa which is believed to lie on the north side of Sturton Lane beneath Home Farm. In the early 19th century two mosaics pavements with underfloor hypocaust heating systems were exposed at Home Farm together with the remains of a Roman bathhouse and other finds. In 1949 a large architectural stone was unearthed at the rear of the Home Farm farm buildings that was interpreted as a support for a substantial archway.

The full extent of the main villa building and its surrounding complex of domestic and farm buildings and bathhouse is not known; archaeological investigations at Home Farm in 2009 failed to identify any features associated with the villa. However potential remains for any below-ground construction works in this area to encounter archaeological deposits relating to the site. A Roman finger ring has also been found in the vicinity of the application site.

Three parallel ditches likely to represent a major boundary dating from the late Bronze Age to Iron Age can be seen on aerial photographs southwest of the application site. Other sections of this triple ditch system can be traced on the western edge of Scawby village and as a quadruple ditch complex to the north of Hibaldstow. There are further indications of enclosure features associated with these ditches within the site vicinity.

In view of the archaeological potential of this area several archaeological investigations have taken place in connection with recent development proposals. These include an archaeological evaluation comprising the excavation of four trial trenches that was carried out on the former nursery site adjacent to the current application site. A single shallow gully running north-south was seen in one of the trenches, the fill of which contained animal bones and a single sherd of Roman greyware pottery. No other features of archaeological interest were identified.

The geophysical survey and archaeological trial trenching that the applicant commissioned has revealed only two ditches exposed at the north of the site. One of the ditches yielded a single sherd of pottery which has been identified as being 13th to 15th century in date. The other ditch was undated but possibly associated with the first. The presence of medieval pottery suggests that this ditch is probably not associated with the nearby Roman villa.

The absence of any other features within the application site suggests that this area to the south of Main Street and the supposed site of the Roman villa was used primarily as agricultural land.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

The groundworks associated with the proposed construction of the dwellings and associated services are likely to disturb or destroy archaeological evidence and the significance of any remains.

The results of the archaeological investigations indicate that the application site contains few remains of any archaeological significance and these remains do not merit preservation in situ.

The HER does not object to this application but advises that appropriate mitigation measures to offset the harm are adopted to preserve the archaeological evidence of the site by record. Such measures should comprise a programme of monitoring, excavation and recording commonly known as a 'watching brief' during all groundworks associated with the proposals in the area of Plot 1 and the adjacent access road. The archaeological fieldwork would be followed by post-excavation assessment, reporting, analysis and publication of any results as required.

A suitably qualified archaeological contractor should undertake this work on the developer's behalf in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) submitted to and agreed with the planning authority in advance of any development commencing. I would be happy to advise the developer on the content of a WSI that would deal with the anticipated archaeological deposits, or advise on a specification produced by the developer's archaeologist.

A suitably qualified archaeological contractor should undertake this work on the developer's behalf in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI). The archaeological contractor should prepare the WSI for the applicant to submit to the planning authority **in advance of** the determination of the planning application.

Where the mitigation WSI is not submitted for consideration with the application, it will be necessary to agree pre-commencement conditions with the applicant to secure the submission and the implementation of a suitable scheme, to be agreed with the planning authority prior to development commencing.

I would be happy to advise the developer on the content of a WSI that would deal with the anticipated archaeological deposits, or advise on a specification produced by the developer's archaeologist. All archaeological work should be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Chartered Institute of Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance (www.archaeologists.net) and relevant Historic England professional guidelines (<http://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/>).

RECOMMENDATION

As the application currently stands, **pre-commencement planning conditions will be required** where the planning authority is minded to grant permission for this application. To avoid the imposition of such conditions, the applicant should submit an appropriate WSI before the determination of the application, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF 199 and Local Plan policy HE9.

Where a WSI is not received before a determination, the provision for this archaeological work programme can be accommodated by the standard conditions and so I would be grateful if the following wording could be added to any permission that may be granted:

Condition 1

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of an archaeological mitigation strategy, to be defined in a Written Scheme of Investigation that has been submitted to, and approved in writing, by the local planning authority. The strategy shall accord with a brief provided by North Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record and shall include details of the following:

- i. Measures to ensure the preservation by record of archaeological features within the area of Plot 1 and the adjacent access road
- ii. Methodologies for the recording and recovery of archaeological remains including artefacts and ecofacts.
- iii. Post-fieldwork methodologies for assessment and analyses.
- iv. Report content and arrangements for dissemination, and publication proposals.
- v. Archive preparation and deposition with recognised repositories such as North Lincolnshire Museum and the ADS digital archive.
- vi. A timetable of works in relation to the proposed development, including sufficient notification and allowance of time to ensure that the site work is undertaken and completed in accordance with the strategy.
- vii. Monitoring arrangements, including the notification in writing to the North Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record Office of the commencement of archaeological works and the opportunity to monitor such works.
- viii. A list of all staff involved in the implementation of the strategy, including sub-contractors and specialists, their responsibilities and qualifications.

Condition 2

The applicant shall notify the planning authority in writing of the intention to commence the archaeological site works at least 7 days before commencement. Thereafter, the archaeological mitigation strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings. No variation shall take place without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

Condition 3

A copy of any analysis, reporting, publication or archiving required as part of the mitigation strategy shall be deposited at the North Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record within six months of commencement of the archaeological programme of work or such other period as may be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason

To comply with NPPF 205, policy CS6 of the Core Strategy, policy HE9 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan because the site potentially contains archaeologically significant remains that the development would otherwise destroy; the archaeological mitigation strategy is required in order to preserve archaeological evidence by means of a comprehensive record and creation of a permanent archive, to advance public understanding. The archaeological mitigation strategy must be prepared and approved for implementation prior to the commencement of any groundwork within the application site that would otherwise result in destruction without record.

I trust this recommendation is acceptable.

Alison Williams
Historic Environment Officer
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