

Application no: 20/00293/OUT

Location: Bicester Gateway Business Park, Wendlebury Road, Chesterton

Archaeology Schedule

Recommendation:

Objection for the following reason/s:



The results of an archaeological evaluation will need to be submitted along with any planning application for this site in line with paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

Comments:

The site is located in an area of archaeological considerable archaeological interest immediately north of the scheduled Roman Town of Alchester (SM 18). The Roman Road north from the Town to Towcester forms the eastern boundary of the proposed development area. Another Roman Road, Akeman Street, forms the southern boundary of the site.

An archaeological excavation during the A41 widening recorded a significant amount of extra mural settlement on the southern edge of the proposed development area consisting of stone building foundations, roadways, pits and ditches. These were recorded immediately south of the area of this proposed development. A cemetery was found immediately to the north of this site, on the northern side of the A41. Evidence of Iron Age settlement was also recorded along with archaeological features dating to the post Roman period.

An archaeological evaluation has been undertaken on this proposed site which has recorded a number of archaeological deposits dating to the Roman period, spanning the 1st to 4th centuries AD with activity concentrated in the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. These included probable floor surfaces and a possible oven or kiln along with a number of ditches and pits.

This evaluation was undertaken for a previous application (16/02586/OUT) however and the evaluation trenches were located to investigate the specific proposed site plan for this previous development. The area of dense Roman settlement immediately north of the scheduled monument is considered to be of demonstrably equivalent significance to this scheduled site and as such a method statement setting out how this area would be reserved in situ was agreed and submitted with the previous application. As a result of this we recommended in our advice dated 31st January 2017 that,

‘A programme of archaeological investigation and mitigation will still be required for the rest of the site but following the removal of the area of dense Roman deposits we are satisfied that this can be secured through an appropriately worded condition’

This new proposed has however removed this area of preservation as agreed for the previous application and includes areas that were not investigated by the archaeological evaluation for this previous application.

It is therefore likely that the southern areas of this site will contain further archaeological deposits considered to be of demonstrably equivalent significance to a scheduled site which may need to be considered subject to the same policies for designated sites as set out in footnote 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019). This will need to be fully assessed and considered before any planning decision is taken for the site in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019), we would therefore recommend that, prior to the determination of this application the applicant should therefore be responsible for the implementation of an archaeological field evaluation of these un-investigated areas.

This must be carried out by a professionally qualified archaeological organisation and should aim to define the character and extent of the archaeological remains within the application area, and thus indicate the weight which should be attached to their preservation. This information can be used for identifying potential options for minimising or avoiding damage to the archaeology and on this basis, an informed and reasonable decision can be taken.

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Officer's Title: Planning Archaeologist
Date: 20-02-20
