



Historic England

Ms Caroline Ford  
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Planning, Housing & Economy  
Bodicote House, Bodicote  
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Direct Dial: 0207 973 3644

Our ref: P01175833

8 March 2020

Dear Ms Ford

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015  
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**BICESTER GATEWAY BUSINESS PARK, WENDLEBURY ROAD, CHESTERTON,  
OXFORDSHIRE  
Application No. 20/00293/OUT**

Thank you for your letter of 17 February 2020 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

**Historic England Advice**

I understand that this is an application for a mixed development. The site lies immediately north of the scheduled monument known as Alchester Roman town.

There will be no direct impact on archaeological remains within the scheduled monument but archaeological work has shown that remains of equivalent importance lie within the site. These include probable floor surfaces and a kiln, and are evidence of activity and probably settlement just outside the walls of the Roman town. I concur with the advice provided by the Oxfordshire County Council Archaeology Service, that further evaluation is required before determination of the planning application, as the extent of the remains of potential national importance has not yet been fully defined.

Remains of equivalent importance to designated remains should be treated as if they were designated (National Planning Policy Framework, footnote 63).

The 2016 heritage desk-based assessment (CA Report No. 16322) submitted with this application concludes that the development has the potential to cause some harm to the scheduled monument, because the development will impact the significance of the scheduled monument as contributed to by its setting (page 4; 5.21, 5.24). While this may be the case, I advise that the assessment of this impact should be reconsidered



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and revised, taking the following points into account:

The application is for a revised scheme with revised building footprints, massing and landscaping (albeit indicative at this outline stage). The 2016 assessment is therefore out of date and the submitted Archaeology Summary Note (2020) does not mention setting.

The 2016 assessment confuses the setting assessment (see 5.21) by bringing the extra-mural buried archaeological remains into the discussion. This should be rectified.

The same heritage consultant is currently undertaking a revised 5-stage setting assessment of the adjacent site to the east (19/01747/OUT; 19/01740/HYBRID), following the Historic England guidance, *The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2017* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). It should therefore be comparatively straightforward to assess the site under discussion here.

Whether the two sites are assessed separately, or together, it is important that the cumulative impact is considered - see Historic England setting guidance (referenced above), page 4).

Views out from the scheduled monument should form part of the assessment and the extent to which the new development would change the experience of the monument should be made clear, particularly as regards visibility.

Cross-referencing to landscape and visual assessment will be helpful, as this assessment has been updated for the new development.

The revised assessment should make clear how the development will comply with Policy Bicester 10 of the Cherwell Local Plan which sets out *Conservation and enhancement of the setting of Alchester Roman Town Scheduled Ancient Monument and the setting out of opportunities to better reveal its significance*, as a key principle.

## Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 189 and 190 of the NPPF, and footnote 63. Should harm to the scheduled monument be identified, it must be justified as required by paragraph 194.

Cherwell Local Plan, Policy Bicester 10, is also applicable.





Historic England

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely



**David Wilkinson**

Inspector of Ancient Monuments

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cc: Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist, Oxfordshire County Council



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