

A/74/13 The Vinery, Poling – proposed distribution warehouse and covered storage, trade counter and associated offices and upgrading of access road for the site together with improvement of existing junction with the A 27

West Sussex County Council response: ARCHAEOLOGY

Summary and recommendation:

- No objection subject to programme of archaeological recording (strip, map and sample) in advance of construction.
- Following permission, it is recommended that provision be made by means of a planning condition for a programme of archaeological investigation and recording, to take place following removal/ clearance of any existing structures or handstanding and before the commencement of construction. This is in order that any below ground heritage assets (archaeological features) may be appropriately sampled, investigated and recorded and the findings incorporated into a written report.
- In the fullness of time the report will become publicly accessible through the West Sussex HER and the archive deposited in a suitable local museum or repository.

Suggested Planning Condition (Archaeology)

An archaeological investigation (sampling, monitoring and recording) of the site shall be carried out at the expense of the developer in accordance with a specification (written scheme of investigation) to be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing following the demolition of any existing buildings and before the commencement of building works.

Reason : To ensure appropriate monitoring and recording of any archaeological assets on the site prior to commencement of new building works.

Policies: Arun District Local Plan, 2003: retained Policy AREA17; Arun Draft Local Plan 2013-2028 policy DM33: Sites of Archaeological Interest; NPPF paragraph 169

Comment

The supporting documents accompanying the planning application on the Arun website include an archaeological desk based assessment prepared by the Southampton City Council Archaeological Unit.

The landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), photographic survey, indicates that the site of the proposed warehouse is open ground/ field. However, I note that on our GIS database the 1947 air photo shows rectangular features within the northern half of the proposed site which are difficult to identify precisely (and did not survive long in the post WWII period). These may have been areas of

wartime/ immediate post-war horticultural activity (? cold frames/ cloches etc rather than greenhouse structures which could have involved some ground disturbance). In case there are any structures associated with the former Worthing Vineries it is recommended that on-site archaeological investigation and recording should follow the removal of any structures (if present) but precede the commencement of new development.

The Southampton Unit desk based assessment (DBA) provides a very helpful summary of the known heritage assets and listed buildings. Taking into account the LVIA's photo analysis of the views towards the proposed site, as far as I can establish (bearing in mind that my conclusions are based on a 'desktop' appraisal of the application site and its vicinity rather than a site visit) the setting of the listed buildings on Poling Street (including the grade I Poling priory and St Nicholas' Church, also grade I) would not be adversely affected. With the relatively flat 'lie' of the land and a distance of some 450 metres between the proposed warehouse and the nearest point on Poling Street together with proposed additional planting on the western boundary to reinforce the existing line of poplars, there should be some 'buffering' to protect views from Poling Street and the Conservation Area at its southern end.

The Southampton Unit DBA drawing on information in the West Sussex HER indicates a range of archaeological sites and finds of all periods within a 1km radius. These include a range of prehistoric and Romano-British activity: (Angmering Roman villa 700m or so to the south): in the middle ages the focus was on the vaillage, church and the priory (a former preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers) and latterly there was World War II activity to the south west with the radar station at the appropriately named Radar Barn. The DBA report concludes that the proposed application site has the potential to include archaeological remains from prehistoric to post-medieval times and that "...any remains are likely to be of local significance)...the land use of the site over the last is not thought to have been destructive of potential archaeological remains and therefore any which do survive are likely to be well preserved".

I concur with these findings and, taking them into account, recommend that archaeological investigation should be undertaken as a condition of planning permission. A 'strip, map and record' approach is likely to be the appropriate method of archaeological recording, after determination of the application, assuming the need to strip topsoil/ ploughsoil and undertake a moderate degree of ground levelling. Any geotechnical test pits (or boreholes) required should be excavated with an appropriately qualified archaeologist in attendance to review the results. (This could inform the archaeological mitigation strategy).

Taking into consideration the size of the proposed application site (4.65 ha of which the western part of the site is proposed to be retained as pasture) and the nature of the development proposal (for a steel framed warehouse and office building) I do not consider that a pre-determination archaeological field evaluation is needed but after planning permission is granted any buried archaeological remains should be adequately sampled and recorded.

This archaeological investigation should consist of a strip, map and sample exercise covering the footprint of the warehouse and the areas affected by the upgrading of the access road. The investigation should be undertaken by an appropriately experienced archaeologist. The Southampton Unit that prepared the DBA or another suitably qualified archaeological contractor should be able to provide a 'mitigation strategy' setting out the proposed approach to archaeological sampling and investigation and written scheme of investigation (WSI or specification) for details of how the recording will be carried out.

M Taylor 4/7/13