

## **Application Y/87/13**

### **Land Southwest of Drove Lane Farm Yapton**

**Description of Works:**     **Installation of solar farm comprising erection of solar arrays, inverters, transformers, equipment housing, security fencing, internal tracks & ancillary equipment. Departure from the Development Plan.**

### **West Sussex County Council Archaeology response**

#### **Summary:**

No objection to the proposals subject to a planning condition to provide for archaeological monitoring and recording.

The site lies to the west of an area, within 100m of Drove Lane, which has produced archaeological evidence from the Middle Bronze Age (including a hoard of five bronze axes which are now in Littlehampton Museum), late Bronze burnt flint and pottery and Iron Age occupation material. The wider area has produced prehistoric and Roman evidence in sufficient quantity to infer that there is at least a moderate possibility that the application site may also contain archaeological features and deposits.

#### **Recommendation:**

The applicant, in fulfilling the recommendations of NPPF paragraph 128, has commissioned an archaeological desk based assessment (DBA) which provides an excellent summary of the potential within the application site and the DBA is included among the documents accompanying the application on the Arun planning portal. Place-name evidence indicates that 'ham' element in Hams Lane (which leads westwards off Drove Lane and the barn and former cottages also of this name) can be traced back as early as the late 13<sup>th</sup> century but it may refer to water meadow rather than settlement at that time.

The construction technique for the solar array will require posts to be driven into the ground to support each solar panel, the panels then being aligned in rows with some 6 - 10 metres between each row. The cabling connecting the panels will be carried above ground but at the end of the rows/ arrays the cables will be placed in trenches 1.1m deep which link to the central inverter units. The footprint of the central inverters will be 7 by 4m and the primary substation will have a footprint of 10 by 10m with foundation depths of 1.5 and 2.5 metres respectively. Although the footprints are modest, at these depths any archaeological features present would be likely to be removed and in the case of

the substation the depth of 2.5 metres may encounter geo-archaeological or historic raised beach deposits.

While acknowledging there will always be a minor risk of penetration damage from the impact of the two posts per panel driven into the ground, and notwithstanding the large overall area of the site at 36.9ha I consider that the impact of the arrays themselves will be minimal in terms of any below ground archaeology and, effectively, will preserve any below ground remains *in situ*. With regard to the cables to be buried in trenches, the inverter units and the substation, the required groundworks for this element of the proposal have the capacity to damage or destroy below ground archaeological features and I concur with the recommendation of the DBA (Non-technical summary, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph and section 6, paragraph 6.4) that these should be mitigated by means of a planning condition.

I recommend that groundworks for placing cabling underground and for excavating foundations for the substation and should be archaeologically monitored and recorded and, within the written scheme of investigation (WSI – see below), provision for geo-archaeological sampling and analysis, if appropriate to the depth of excavation required for the substation.

### **Suggested Planning Condition (Archaeology)**

An archaeological recording and monitoring exercise shall be carried out at the expense of the developer in accordance with a specification (WSI - written scheme of investigation) to be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing before the commencement of building works.

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

Policies: draft Arun Local Plan (Local Plan 2013-2028) Policy DM 33 Sites of Archaeological Interest, (Arun District Local Plan, 2003: retained Policy AREA17), NPPF paragraph 169.

M Taylor 23/12/13