Alison White

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Posted At: 31 July 2009 11:48

Conversation: Mr P Metcalfe/ Cathy Horton- Request for pre-determination archaeological work for 09/00469/FUL

Posted To: Planning Application Comments

Subject: Mr P Metcalfe/ Cathy Horton- Request for pre-determination archaeological work for 09/00469/FUL

Dear Philip,

Planning Application 09/00469/FUL; ERECTION OF 140 NO. DWELLINGS WITH GARAGES AND CARPARKING AND CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS AND SEWERS; Land East Of Groby Village Cemetery

Thank you for consulting us on the above application and to Cathy for confirming that an archaeological assessment has not been submitted with the scheme. I have appraised the site against the Historic Environment Record (HER) and knowledge about past settlement in the Leicestershire landscape. The site lies close to probable Roman settlements at Ratby and Groby (MLE15778 & 7931) and there is a report that a Roman jug handle was found in soil thought to have come from Cowpen Spinney. The location of the site, on a bluff in the landscape overlooking watercourse suggests it would have been favourable to past settlers. Additionally the scale of the site suggests archaeological remains of some sort may be present within the area. As such, we consider there to be a reasonable likelihood of archaeological remains being present but cannot offer any information as to their nature or character. In the absence of this infromation we are not in a position to advise on either the principle of development or an appropriate mitigation strategy. As such we would expect the applicant to supply an archaeological geophysical survey of the development area as a starting point to inform about the character of any archaeological remains.

The preservation of archaeological remains is, of course, a "material consideration" in the determination of planning applications. The proposals include operations that may destroy any buried archaeological remains that are present, but the archaeological implications cannot be adequately assessed on the basis of the currently available information. Since it is possible that archaeological remains may be adversely affected by this proposal, we recommend that the planning authority defer determination of the application and request that the applicant complete an Archaeological Impact Assessment of the proposals, beginning with an archaeological geophysial survey. The need for further work will then be informed by the results of this survey.

This information should be submitted to the planning authority before any decision on the planning application is taken, so that an informed decision can be made, and the application refused or modified in the light of the results as appropriate. Without the information that such an Assessment would provide, it would be difficult in our view for the planning authority to assess the archaeological impact of the proposals.

Should the applicant be unwilling to supply this information as part of the application, it may be appropriate to consider directing the applicant to supply the information under Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Applications) Regulations 1988, or to refuse the application. These recommendations conform with the advice provided in DoE PPG16 "Archaeology and Planning".

Should you be minded to refuse this application on other grounds, the lack of archaeological information should be an additional reason for refusal, to ensure the archaeological potential is given future consideration.

The Archaeology Section, as advisors to the planning authority, will provide a formal Brief for the work and approve a Specification for the Assessment at the request of the applicant. This will ensure that the necessary programme of archaeological work is undertaken to the satisfaction of the planning authority, in a cost-effective manner and with minimum disturbance to the archaeological resource. The Specification should comply with this Department's "Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland" and relevant Institute of Field Archaeologists "Standards" and "Code of Practice", and should include a suitable indication of arrangements for the implementation of the archaeological work, and the proposed timetable.

Information on suitable archaeological organisations to carry out this work can be obtained from the Historic

and Natural Environment Team. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely
Lucy Griffin
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