

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL – PLANNING SERVICES

Environment & Heritage Team – Response to consultation by County Planning

ARCHAEOLOGY comments

To: - planning.applications@westsussex.gov.uk

FAO: - Andrew Sierakowski, County Planning

DATE: 24th August 2021

Consultation date: 13th April 2021

REF.: WSCC/011/21

LOCATION: Ford Circular Technology Park, Ford Road, Arundel BN18 0XL

PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing buildings and structures and construction and operation of an energy recovery facility and a waste sorting and transfer facility for treatment of municipal, commercial and industrial wastes, including ancillary buildings, structures, parking, hardstanding and landscape works.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Planning Condition (Archaeology)

No development shall commence within the site until:

- a) A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include detailed geo-archaeological assessment, trial trench evaluation, follow-up open area excavation and off-site post excavation analysis, including the analysis of palaeo-environmental and geoarchaeological deposits, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority; and
- b) No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the completion of the programme of archaeological evaluation identified in the WSI defined in Part A and confirmed by the Local Authority archaeological advisors.
- c) A mitigation strategy detailing the excavation / preservation strategy shall be submitted to the local planning authority following the completion of the archaeological evaluation.
- d) No development or preliminary groundworks can commence on those areas containing archaeological deposits until the satisfactory completion of fieldwork, as detailed in the mitigation strategy, and which has been approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- e) The applicant will submit to the local planning authority a post excavation assessment (to be submitted within six months of the completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority). This will result in the completion of post excavation analysis, preparation of a full site archive and report

ready for deposition at the local museum, and submission of a publication report and other interpretative material including display boards and/or other promotional material.

Reason: To safeguard the identification, recording, analysis, archiving and understanding of heritage assets.

POLICIES: National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 194-205 (Conserving and enhancing of the Historic Environment); West Sussex Joint Minerals Plan (July 2018), Policy M14 (b) (Historic Environment); Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (Adopted March 2018), Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets.

Archaeology background:

Below-ground archaeological features and deposits

The known below-ground archaeology and historical development of the site are fairly set out in Chapter 10 of the ES.

The known below-ground archaeological remains include a 300-metre long section of the early 19th-century Portsmouth to Arundel canal, infilled and buried below the former Ford Airfield, and remaining traces of part of the removed and built-over aircraft dispersal area of the World War II period airfield, comprising concrete slipways, a workshop and other small buildings.

There have been several previous archaeological intrusive and non-intrusive archaeological investigations on the former airfield that attest to the extent of earlier archaeology on the Airfield, from the Bronze Age to Roman periods. Geophysical survey as part of the outline planning permission for the adjacent The Landings housing development has established the survival of below-ground prehistoric and Roman features as well as the canal within the area of the former Airfield. Areas of archaeological features of Iron Age and Roman settlement, were recorded to the south in 1999 in advance of construction of the Ford Wastewater Treatment Works, extended northwards outside the Works, possibly as far as the current application area. A watching-brief on an access road to the Ford Circular Technology Centre identified surviving prehistoric archaeological features as well as a substantial collection of Mesolithic and Neolithic flints.

Geoarchaeology

A geoarchaeological study of the area utilising the evidence from the existing boreholes for the site has identified that the site overlies both raised beach deposits and an area of alluvium. The latter maybe derived either from an earlier iteration of the River Arun or from marine incursion, its full extent is not known. These deposits have archaeological potential for the Palaeolithic period and past environments. The Cultural Heritage chapter has variously suggested that they are of Low to Moderate significance, however this has not yet been appropriately established and the Geoarchaeological DBA submitted by the applicant has suggested that they have the potential to be of High geoarchaeological potential. They lie at varying depths and are of varying thickness, but at their shallowest they range between 0.5m and 1.5m, and will be clearly impacted on by the scheme, particularly the 4m deep bunker facility and the 2.5m general reduction of site levels.

The Portsmouth to Arundel Canal

During its operation in the early 19th century, the Portsmouth to Arundel canal was a significant feature of the landscape and transport infrastructure of West Sussex. Parts of the Canal and its infrastructure (bridges) survive almost intact, albeit now normally dry; elsewhere it has been infilled and built over.

At Ford Airfield, where the canal is buried and not visible, ADLP Strategic Development Site SD8 (Ford) development principles require development to “Reflect the historic alignment of the canal” (Policy H SP2c (Housing Delivery) SD8 (Ford) (h)). On the illustrative masterplan of “The Landings”, Ford development proposal for Site SD8 (Arun District Council planning application F/4/20), a green space corridor is proposed within this very large site, broadly along the line of and commemorating the buried canal, on the western edge of the former Ford Airfield.

Much of the buried canal structure is likely to survive below the existing concrete rafts and buildings. The infill will be mid-20th century, and expected to be of negligible archaeological value, but the structure of the sides and floor of the canal is expected to have been lined with puddled clay for water retention, is of archaeological interest, and would also be removed. An accommodation bridge crossed the canal, when the latter was in use, its eastern edge within the footprint of the new Waste Sorting and Transfer Facility building (WSTF). The bridge abutments may survive below ground level, and are also of archaeological interest.

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