

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL – PLANNING SERVICES

Environment & Heritage Team – Response to consultation by County Planning

ARCHAEOLOGY comments

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

FAO: - Chris Bartlett, County Planning

DATE: 19th February 2018

Consultation date: 9th February 2018 (Day 21 - 2nd March 2018)

REF.: WSCC/008/18/BN

LOCATION: Lidsey Oil Site, Lidsey Road, Aldingbourne, West Sussex, PO22 9PH

PROPOSAL: Retention of Lidsey oil site including two existing wells and production plant and equipment within the existing site to produce hydrocarbons for a further period of 10 years

RECOMMENDATIONS: No objection on archaeological grounds. Archaeological assessment and mitigation are not required.

SUMMARY:

- Previous archaeological investigation in 2010 found that deposits preserving ancient environment pollen were present, but without fossils and disturbed, such that no further archaeological works were recommended.
- The 2017 LX2 oilwell was drilled within the same disturbed area of the site, prompting similar conclusions.
- The current retention proposals would not involve any new excavations or ground disturbance.
- Therefore there will be no archaeological impact: archaeological mitigation will not be required.

COMMENTS:

Archaeological investigation took place in December 2010 in connection with excavation of a new drilling cellar on the site and the requirements of Condition 20 (archaeological work) of planning permission BN/31/05.

No ancient archaeological features were observed in 2010, owing to previous ground reduction to a depth of over 1 metre. Early prehistoric marine deposits and river silts were present at greater depth, and were sampled at that time. Although containing some ancient pollen, these deposits were found generally to preserve microfossils and other indicators of the prehistoric environment only poorly; no further analysis at this drilling cellar site was recommended. The Environment & Heritage Team recommended at that time the full discharge of Condition 20.

The recent (2017) new production well LX2 was drilled at the western end of the rectangular area excavated in 2010 for drilling cellar construction, and so also within the deposits found in 2010 to have no further potential for archaeological analysis. The current proposals for site retention envisage no new excavations or ground disturbance (Planning Application Statement (PAS), 5.11.1).

Accordingly I concur with the PAS' conclusion (5.11.1) that continued use of the site "will have no impact in terms of localised archaeology". No objection on archaeological grounds is made to the proposals. No archaeological assessment or mitigation measures are required.

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