

**To:** Planning Department of Woking Borough Council

**From:** Heritage Conservation Group: Archaeology

**Application Number:** PLAN/2019/1177

**Date Consultation Received:** 11/12/2019



**Address:** Land south of Hoe Valley School and East of Railway Track, Egley Road, Woking

**Proposal:** Redevelopment of site following demolition of existing building to provide health club building also incorporating external swimming pool, spa garden, terrace and tennis courts, provision of 36 dwelling houses up to 3 storeys in height, vehicle parking, landscaping, and ancillary works.

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**Comments:**

I did not see an Archaeological Assessment submitted in support of this application, which I assume is an oversight, so I refer to the Archaeological Historic Environment Assessment produced for this site by archaeological contractors MOLA as part of the EIA Scoping exercise (Appendix D), produced by Trium Environmental Consulting LLP. The Assessment concluded that no known Heritage Assets are present within the development area, assigning a low archaeological potential for remains of all periods with the exception of a former post-medieval nursery. The potential for previously unknown remains to be present is acknowledged due to the sites location in a less archaeologically understood area, however given the extensive size of the site, combined with its location not far from the Hoe Stream, I would not be so negative about the archaeological potential and more accurately categorise the sites potential as 'unknown'. Given the unknown potential, and that the previously undisturbed nature of the site makes it likely that any below-ground archaeological horizons survive intact, it is also disappointing that no further sources such as Aerial Photography or LiDAR were analysed in order to gain further insight into the archaeological potential.

On this basis, the Archaeological Historic Environment Assessment concludes that no known heritage assets are present, but given the limited archaeological investigation to date in the vicinity of the site, it is likely that further work will be required in order to test the archaeological potential. I agree that further investigative work is required, but the suggestion within the Assessment that archaeology can be mitigated through a Watching Brief during groundworks is wholly inadequate. Due to the large, generally undisturbed nature of the site, combined with the generally unknown archaeological potential, an archaeological trial trench evaluation should be undertaken in the first instance to confirm the nature, date, extent and significance of any archaeological Heritage Assets present. This will allow further decisions to be made about what (if any) mitigation measures are necessary

Given that there is nothing to suggest remains worthy of preservation *in situ* will be present, I do not recommend that the archaeological work needs to be carried out in advance of planning permission (although it is of course better that the work be carried out at the earliest opportunity); but in this instance would recommend that the work be secured by a condition requiring a scheme of archaeological work once, and if, planning permission is granted. To ensure the required archaeological work is secured satisfactorily, the following condition is appropriate and I would recommend that it be attached to any planning permission that may be granted:

*No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, to be conducted in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority.*

Please note that these comments are made from the perspective of below ground archaeology. The relevant Woking Borough Council Conservation Officer should be contacted for comments on the implications of this development on built heritage assets.

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**Signed:** Alex Egginton, Archaeological Officer

**Date:** 17/12/2019

**File Ref:** Con/33/4/29