

Application no: P24/S1498/FUL

Location: Land to the north of the Culham Science Centre Thame Lane OX14 3GY

Archaeology

Recommendation:

Objection for the following reason/s:

Comments:

The results of an archaeological trenched evaluation, will need to be submitted in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), paragraph 200, prior to the determination of this planning application.

We have previously provided archaeological advice on this site in a pre-application response (E0700179/2022/031212) in July 2022 where we advised that an archaeological desk-based assessment and the results of an archaeological evaluation would need to be submitted with any planning application for the site. We have also provided advice on the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as part of the formal scoping opinion sought by the applicant (P22/S4551/SCO) in January 2023 where we further reiterated that a programme of archaeological trenched evaluation would need to be undertaken.

We previously noted in our scoping comments that the results of a desk-based assessment and geophysical survey alone would not provide for a sufficient and suitably informed assessment of the potential archaeological resource within the site, an understanding as to its significance, and the likely effects of proposed development on that significance. These comments are acknowledged in the Consultations table of Chapter 3: Cultural Heritage of the submitted Environmental Statement (ES).

Throughout Chapter 3 of the submitted ES it is stated that a trenched evaluation is to be conducted, this required to appropriately inform the archaeology baseline (paragraph 3.8) and reduce existing limitations on assessing and understanding the effects of proposed development on the below ground archaeological resource (paragraph 3.30). A proposed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for undertaking trenched evaluation is also provided at Annexe 4, Appendix Cultural Heritage of Volume 3 of the submitted ES. This submitted WSI itself acknowledges at paragraph 1.1.2 that the trenched evaluation is to be undertaken to inform the Planning Authority in support of submission of a planning application.

As set out by our previous comments to this application, the results of an archaeological trenched evaluation will therefore need to be undertaken on the site, and the agreed results submitted prior to the determination of this application.

The archaeological field evaluation must be undertaken in line with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists standards and guidance including the submission and agreement of a suitable WSI. Whilst we acknowledge the submission of a proposed outline WSI provided at Annex 4, Appendix Cultural Heritage of Volume 3 of the submitted ES, there are a number of issues with this WSI that will require amendment before we could agree that it is acceptable.

An appropriately amended WSI for the required archaeological trenched evaluation works will therefore need to be submitted and agreed.

Officer's Name: County Archaeological Services

Officer's Title: Archaeologist

Date: 31/5/2024