

To: Planning Department of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

From: Surrey County Council, Historic Environment Planning: Archaeology

Application Number: 21/00028/FUL

Date Consultation Received: 24-02-2021



Address: Priest Hill Sports Pavilion, Reigate Road, Ewell KT17 3DT

Proposal: Construction of a new all weather sports pitch including fencing, floodlighting and all other associated works.

Comments:

For the attention of John Robinson

Thank you for consulting Surrey County Council's Historic Environment Planning (HEP) team regarding the above application.

This proposal is for a new all-weather sports pitch with an area of 0.74ha. A proposal of this size should normally be accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment in accordance with Local Plan Policy DM8.

The proposal lies in an area of archaeological interest by virtue of a number of archaeological discoveries and finds spots recorded on Surrey's Historic Environment Record (HER) in the environs of Priest Hill. These include Late Roman (4th- and 5th-century AD) cremation and inhumation burials between the application area and the College buildings found in 1940 when war time trenches were dug across the field. The finds were reported by the eminent Romanist, Shepherd Frere. Roman pottery was also recorded close to, possibly within, the application area and to the south '*during levelling for playing fields*' and further upslope of the site (Abdy and Bierton, 1997). This suggests widespread Roman activity on this part of Priest Hill above the Roman small town of Ewell that lay on the main route south from *Londinium* (London) to *Noviomagus* (Chichester).

However, a review of other information submitted with this application indicates that the application area has undergone significant previous landscaping. This is evident from site photographs, the topographic survey and the site investigation report, all of which indicate that the application area has been subject to terracing (cut and fill) to level the north-facing slope to create the existing playing fields. This is particularly evident in the site investigation report which notes up to 4m of made ground on the banked area along the north edge of the application area. However, this does not preclude that there will be surviving areas that are at, or close to, the original ground level, where buried remains may survive.

The proposal, as I understand it, will involve further levelling to create the new all-weather pitch and involving some additional cut and fill. As there is some potential for this to reveal buried remains, potentially all that survives of a wider Roman landscape, it would be appropriate for some level of archaeological investigation, should this application be approved. A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during topsoil and subsoil stripping in those areas where buried remains might survive would be appropriate. This can be secured by condition and the following is proposed:

'No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.'

This is in accordance with Paragraph 199 of the NPPF which states that '*Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible*'.

I trust that this is satisfactory. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this further or require any further information.

Abdy, C, and Bierteron, G, 1997, 'A Gazetteer of Romano-British archaeological sites in Ewell' Surrey Archaeological Collections 84, 123-41.

Signed: Roland Smith, Archaeological Officer

Date: 5 March 2021

File Ref: Con/33/6/7