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Direct Dial: 0121 625 6860

Our ref: PA01032271

Your ref: -

27 January 2020

Dear Mr Crook

Pre-application Advice

LAND AT MILL LANE , FECKENHAM, B96 6HY

Summary

These proposals comprise the erection of a new two storey dwelling on land off Mill Lane. The proposed development site is located adjacent to scheduled monument known as '*Feckenham manorial moated site*' (List Entry No. 1018361). The proposed development has the potential to impact archaeology within the site as well as impact upon the setting of the adjacent scheduled monument. Further assessment will be required order to assess the level of this impact and inform the final design of these proposals. This is likely to include desk-based assessment, survey works and on-site investigations. Please see our initial comments below.

Advice

The Feckenham manorial site comprises a large elliptical moated site, thought to be the site of the Royal Manor of Feckenham and the court of the Forest of Feckenham. The site has been shown to have a good survival of archaeological deposits, with evidence for several phases of domestic occupation. Key features include the sites of the (now demolished) medieval royal buildings, manor house and later court house and prison, and the substantial defensive banks and ditches that ring this fortified site. The site's importance is enhanced by its very high historical value, with good documentation which can chart the site back to c. AD 802, and its high status.

The scheduled area forms the southern boundary of the proposed development site. Any works to this boundary are likely to require Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC). Although the rest of the site is not within the monument, it still lies within a very archeologically sensitive area and would be considered the site of non-designated heritage asset(s), as per Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The site appears to line on the line of the manorial site's perimeter earthworks, and there is a potential for archaeological evidence which could directly relate to the scheduled monument - for example earthworks, banks and ditches of the manorial site's defences, associated medieval features, buried deposits and artefactual material. It also appears to be close to, or on, the potential route of what is thought to have been the original entrance to the manorial site through the northern



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earthworks (now partially in-filled). Depending on their form, extent and the level of survival, any features within the site which are directly related to the scheduled monument could be considered to be of equivalent 'national importance' and therefore footnote 63 of the NPPF would apply (See also the 'non-designated heritage assets' section of the Historic Environment NPPF Planning Practice Guidance).

Although there may have been impacts on this site from later activity (such as the sewer at the rear of the site), the historic mapping does not indicate any substantial building development and therefore level of survival of archaeological remains (if present) could be good. Where archaeological features do survive within the site, the groundwork's required for foundations, services and landscaping could have a direct physical impact and there is a potential for the works to cause 'harm' to the significance of these heritage assets (for example from damage or destruction of below ground archaeology). If the works impact features directly related to the manorial site, this could also be considered to cause harm to the significance of the adjacent scheduled monument (see paragraphs 193 - 199 of the NPPF).

Other factors also need consideration - such as the impact of the development precluding future archaeological investigation and the impact of the development upon setting of the scheduled monument. 'Setting' comprises the surroundings in which heritage assets are experienced. It is not just limited to visual considerations. Please see Historic England's *The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 (2nd Edition)* - <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/> - for a more detailed explanation of setting and how it should be assessed.

A more detailed assessment is required before we could discuss setting and impact in more depth; however based on the information we have to hand we can suggest the following: At Feckneham, the manorial site's setting will include elements such as views to and from the site, the character of its surroundings and how it is (and was) approached and traversed. Given the character of the site and the relative heights between the monument and Mill Lane, it is unlikely that the proposed development would have a substantial negative impact. Where it might be visible (beyond the vegetation and behind the current club house) its upper levels and roof would be seen in conjunction with the neighbouring properties and other houses visible around the monument. Its proposed height, scale and design would be in keeping with the existing properties, and providing care is taken with its choice of materials and finishes (including roof-scape and any solar panelling), it is unlikely to be so out of character for these views that it would negatively draw the eye or cause any notable intrusion into how the monument is experienced from within the site. Similarly, it would largely be in keeping with the character of Mill Lane and how this this area on the north / outer side of the monument is experienced.





There are however two areas which may require further thought. Firstly, the vegetation around the monument is not constant. Winter views will be more open and in the future vegetation may be cleared off the site to help protect and conserve the archaeology. Similarly, the club house may not always be present within this site. Therefore, as above, the design of the visible parts of the new building and choice of materials will be important and it would be useful to understand how visible it might be when the vegetation in this area is at its lowest (such as during this winter). The 2nd consideration is the building's relationship with any features within the site and the potential location of the entrance to the manorial site. Although no longer active, it would be less than ideal for the new building to fully 'block' the route of the original entrance into the manorial site - particularly as it appears to have historically always been undeveloped. The layout of the proposed development, and the positioning and scale of the new build within it, will therefore be an important consideration. The impact of this on any archaeological features within the site, and the setting of the scheduled monument, will need careful assessment.

Next Steps

Historic England have no objection in principle to the re-use of this site, however further information is needed in order for these proposals to be fully assessed and understood in line with the NPPF, the requirements of Scheduled Monument Consent, and current standards and guidance.

In the first instance, a heritage statement is required in order to consider the impact of the proposals and the resulting benefit, loss or harm to the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets. This should include an appropriate desk-based assessment and settings assessment (as discussed above).

Given the archaeological potential of the site, it is likely that on-site archaeological works will be required and the results of these provided in support of any planning application. It would be important to understand the relationship of the current proposals to any earthworks or other visible features within and adjacent to the site and a topographic / measured earthwork survey maybe appropriate. This information would also help inform the settings assessment and in particular the new build's position in relation to the potential opening on the northern side of the scheduled monument, as discussed above.

The nature of the buried archaeology within the site would also need to be assessed and an archaeological evaluation required. We would strongly recommend you undertake consultation with Worcestershire's County Council historic environment services to discuss the scope of these works. The results of the onsite and desk-based works would inform any design changes which might be required in order to minimise or mitigate impact (such as changes to layout or foundation design). The information should be provided as part of any subsequent planning application.



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Historic England

Your planning application would also need to provide clear and convincing justification for *any* harm to the designated heritage assets (the scheduled monument) and allow for that harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals. The same requirements would apply to non-designated archaeology of equivalent national importance to the scheduled monument.

Any works (including any evaluation works) to the southern boundary would require Scheduled Monument Consent. SMC Guidance and application forms can be found here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/consents/smc/> and we would be happy to discuss SMC in more detail with you.

Thank you for involving us at the pre-application stage. Your scheme may benefit from our continued engagement; if so, we would welcome the opportunity to continue discussions through our Extended Pre-application service, details of which can be found on our website at www.HistoricEngland.org.uk/EAS. If you would like to discuss this option further, please do contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nick Carter

Inspector of Ancient Monuments

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