

Steven Weemes

From: ArchaeologyDC
Sent: 08 November 2023 15:16
To: Helen Wass
Cc: Planning DC
Subject: CCC/23/110/FUL - Land At Streetly Hall Farm Webbs Road West Wickham (Archaeology comments)

CCC/23/110/FUL | Farm-based anaerobic digestion renewable energy facility, construction of vehicular access/road to A1307, associated infrastructure and landscaping | Land At Streetly Hall Farm Webbs Road West Wickham Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB21 4RP

Dear Helen,

The applicant has provided a Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (HEDBA) incorporating a geophysical survey to support their planning application (GHC Heritage 2023; Allen Archaeology Limited 2022). While this work was carried out in response to pre-application advice provided by Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET; Gdaniec 2022), the applicant or their agents did not contact this office for a brief for the geophysics, nor agreed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) with us before the work took place, contrary to good practice. Despite this, the geophysical survey has provided useful information regarding the archaeological potential of the site, although it does not cover the area of the proposed access road to the south.

Several areas of particular archaeological interest have been identified, although it is important to note that magnetometer surveys are unable to reliably identify all sub-surface archaeological remains within a particular site, and are especially poor at identifying discrete features (such as pits and postholes), graves/human burials, buried soils/land surfaces and, in comparison to other techniques, masonry structures.

A collection of pits or large postholes in the north centre of the site are of considerable interest. They are aligned in straight lines, are therefore strongly likely to be anthropogenic in origin, and may conceivably represent a structure. They may be prehistoric (perhaps Neolithic or Iron Age) or considerably more recent in date, and could in theory be very significant archaeologically.

A sinuous linear ditch running broadly east-west may have a parallel companion, and if so may be a prehistoric or Roman trackway, or boundary ditch.

Further archaeology may also be present, with particular potential in the area of the Roman road.

Further information is required to enable the archaeological implications of this scheme to be assessed, in the form of intrusive trial trenching. However, given the scale of development, the results of the geophysical survey and the general level of potential of the site, I am happy that full evaluation of the site may be split into two phases, with one, limited, initial phase of trenching targeted on the geophysical anomalies, to be carried out prior to the determination of this planning application (as per NPPF para 194). A second, more extensive phase should follow secured by condition should the development gain planning permission, to fully evaluate the proposed development site.

The proposed access road will cross the Via Devana (the Roman road) – the applicant’s archaeological agent has supplied me with a plan of a proposed no-dig approach where the access route crosses the Roman road which would be acceptable if adopted. However this has not been submitted with the planning application (as far as I can see). This should be supplied by the applicant to formalise the approach, and ensure that the proposed impact is satisfactory.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or queries.

Regards,

Dr Simon Wood FSA Scot

Senior Archaeologist

07484 915998 (Please note that my telephone number has recently changed)



Historic Environment Team

Place and Sustainability

Cambridgeshire County Council

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