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Our Ref: CSF46628  
Date: 06<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Dear Mr Rutter

**Planning Application– SCC/0045/23SE Land to the north of Spring Grove Farm, Withersfield.**

This site lies in an area of archaeological potential recorded on the County Historic Environment Record (HER), with the proposed plant setting located close to the 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead of 'Spring Grove Farm' (HER ref no. WTH 055), and adjacent to the probable route of the Roman road 'Margary's Route 24' (WTH 007). The course of the pipeline which traverses the landscape to the north of the plant is flanked on either side by areas of ancient woodland (WTH 013, 015, 016, 017), with several areas of Roman and Saxon activity also located within close proximity to the proposed pipeline (WTH 025, 026, 031, 042, 043). As a result, there is high potential for the discovery of below-ground heritage assets of archaeological importance within this area, and groundworks associated with the development have the potential to damage or destroy any archaeological remains which exist.

There are no grounds to consider refusal of permission in order to achieve preservation *in situ* of any important below-ground heritage assets. However, in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (Paragraph 205), any permission granted should be the subject of a planning condition to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage asset before it is damaged or destroyed. However, should the applicant wish, we would have no objection to the work being carried out up front, prior to the submission of a planning application.

In this case the following two conditions would be appropriate:

1. No development shall take place within the area indicated [the whole site, inclusive of the digestion facility, pipeline, and lagoons] until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme of investigation shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- a. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
- b. The programme for post investigation assessment
- c. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
- d. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
- e. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
- f. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- g. The site investigation shall be completed prior to development, or in such other phased arrangement, as agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

2. The plant should not be put into use until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed, submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Condition 1 and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition.

**REASON:**

*To safeguard archaeological assets within the approved development boundary from impacts relating to any groundworks associated with the development scheme and to ensure the proper and timely investigation, recording, reporting and presentation of archaeological assets affected by this development, in accordance with Policy HC9 of Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016, Policy CS2 of St Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010 and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).*

**INFORMATIVE:**

*The submitted scheme of archaeological investigation shall be in accordance with a brief procured beforehand by the developer from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service.*

I would be pleased to offer guidance on the archaeological work required and, in our role as advisor to West Suffolk Council, the SCC Archaeological Service will, on request of the applicant, provide a specification for the archaeological work required at this site. In this case, an archaeological evaluation will be required to establish the potential of the site and decisions on the need for any further investigation (excavation before any groundworks commence and/or monitoring during groundworks) will be made on the basis of the results of the evaluation.

Further details on our advisory services and charges can be found on our website: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/archaeology/>

Please do get in touch if there is anything that you would like to discuss or you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Vincent Monahan  
Archaeological Officer

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service