

20220575 Higham Marshes Church Street Higham

KCC Heritage

I have some concerns about the lack of detail related to archaeology. The Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement make the following positive statements:

Planning Statement

As explained in section 3.2.6 in 'Higham_Marshes_Design and Access Statement', the preservation of our archaeological assets is a prime design consideration. The project will protect and enhance the preservation of unscheduled features and return them to a setting more in keeping with their environment at the time of creation - surrounded by water, albeit fresh, not saline and only for part of the year.

Design and Access Statement

3.2.6. Archaeology and Unexploded Ordnance From experience on other sites where landscaping is required, the two factors of extant archaeology and the potential for unexploded ordnance to be unearthed need to be accounted for in any design and its delivery.

Archaeological features are generally easier to establish, and the features identified in the map and gazetteer (presented in the document 'Higham_Marshes_Archaeology Gazetteer') Having identified the known archaeological features and assessed the likelihood of unidentified archaeology, the presence of archaeology does not present an insurmountable obstacle in designing viable new wetland features and, conversely, with a sympathetic design i.e. creating rills and excavating scrapes to a shallow depth and avoiding identified features, the creation of the new wetland features do not present a risk to the extant archaeology. Furthermore, it is accepted that archaeological features in a wetland environment are better protected against deterioration. Overall, this project fulfils the RSPB's objective to ensure the preservation of all its archaeological assets.

These statements are positive but I would like to see a detailed survey of the historic landscape and archaeology of the site area so that it is clear what features have been identified and how any impacts from groundworks would be avoided and/or mitigated (e.g. through an archaeological watching brief).

Would you be able to find out what archaeological studies have been undertaken to support the above statements and could these survey reports be shared.

In the event that planning permission is granted and in the absence of any detailed studies it might be sensible to add a planning condition to provide the appropriate survey and mitigation measures. Such a condition could be:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of

- i. archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and
- ii. following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure appropriate assessment of the archaeological implications of any development proposals and the subsequent mitigation of adverse impacts through preservation in situ or by record.