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Date: 10/10/25

**Re: 20250889**

**Buckland Farm, Chalk Road, Higham, Rochester Kent**

**Outline planning application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection up to 40 residential dwellings, public open space and associated works. Approval is sought for the principal means of vehicular access from Chalk Road and all other matters are reserved.**

Thank you for consulting us on the above planning application.

The site lies in an area of multi-period archaeological potential and is within an area characterised by multi-phase agricultural use within the probable agricultural hinterland of the village of Higham.

The village of Higham (now Lower Higham) is known to date to the medieval period and the existing St Marys church located c.1.25km to the northwest of site, has surviving Norman elements and makes use of reused Roman tile within its construction. An associated priory site St Marys priory was associated with the church and is located opposite the church. A Roman grave and kiln site are located within the immediate vicinity of the church.

Documentary evidence suggests that Roman pottery works were present around the Higham area, and have been located by the HER as c. 55m west of the site at generic grid reference TQ 70 73, although this point is located in a generic grid reference and should not be considered a precise location.

Multiple crops marks are located in the general vicinity of the proposed development; A ring ditch crop mark tentatively dated to the Bronze Age is located c. 280m to the west of the proposed development, the deserted medieval village site of Merston is

located c.895m to the southwest of the site. The village was deserted by AD 1445 and excavation during the 1950s recorded the foundations of the Church of St Giles.

Multiple findspots dating from the late pre-historic to the post medieval period have been found within the general vicinity of the site.

A Desk-based Assessment (Pegasus 2025) was issued on 12/08/25 incorporating the results of a geophysical survey (Sumo 2025) reported on in 01/07/25. This has been very useful for placing the site within its wider archaeological context. The geophysical survey highlighted a single curvilinear feature towards the east of the site that may be archaeological in nature and is broadly similar to archaeological cropmarks seen within the wider area. The survey also highlighted disturbed ground toward the north of the site and suggested this is due to demolition of existing structures within this general vicinity. However, it is not possible to establish via non-obtrusive survey whether this 'made ground' disturbance may be overlying surviving archaeological deposits and limited information is available regarding any truncation within this area.

The site is located at the head of a natural valley and the existing Thames and Medway Canal located to the immediate east of the site, traces the course of the valley, a location which has often been favourable for past settlement and land use. Alluvial Holocene deposits are recorded c.100m to the north of the site on the western side of the canal and it is possible that the made ground deposits results recorded to the north of the site are a continuation of this deposit.

Considering the archaeological and topographic placement of the site and the potential impact of the development of 40 residential dwellings, I recommend that, in the event that planning permission is granted, the following condition is applied to any forthcoming consent:

***To assess and mitigate the impacts of development on significant archaeological remains:***

***A) Prior to any development works the applicant (or their agents or successors in title) shall secure and have reported a programme of archaeological field evaluation works, in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.***

***B) Following completion of archaeological evaluation works, no development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.***

***C) The archaeological safeguarding measures, investigation and recording shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed specification and timetable.***

***D) Within 6 months of the completion of archaeological works a Post-Excavation Assessment Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Post-Excavation Assessment Report shall be in accordance with Kent County Council's requirements and include:***

- a. a description and assessment of the results of all archaeological investigations that have been undertaken in that part (or parts) of the development;***
- b. an Updated Project Design outlining measures to analyse and publish the findings of the archaeological investigations, together with an implementation strategy and timetable for the same;***
- c. a scheme detailing the arrangements for providing and maintaining an archaeological site archive and its deposition following completion.***

***E) The measures outlined in the Post-Excavation Assessment Report shall be implemented in full and in accordance with the agreed timings.***

***Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded in accordance with policies in the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.***

The programme of field evaluation should include a geoarchaeological component comprising testpits or sondages .

I would be pleased to discuss the above further and provide a brief for the evaluation on request.

Yours sincerely

**Jacob Warrender**

Senior Archaeological Officer  
Heritage Conservation