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12 July 2023

2023 0399 Barn North Of Abbey Farm Barn, Church Street, Higham, Rochester Kent

Change of use of an agricultural building into Five Holiday Let Accommodation Units.

Thank you for consulting us on this application.

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential c.50m north of the scheduled medieval Benedictine Priory of St Marys and immediately north of the area of the historic farmstead and within an enclosed area of agricultural land which, judging from historic mapping, may have traditionally been used as an orchard before the present barn was erected in the later 20th century. The site has some medieval archaeological potential but also has pre-medieval potential because of its location at the northern edge of a spur of drier bedrock surrounded by alluvial wetlands.

Groundworks associated with the proposed development may impact on below-ground archaeological remains at the site and I recommend that if planning permission is granted the following condition is applied to any forthcoming consent:

To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded during development works:

- A) Prior to any development works the applicant (or their agents or successors in title) shall secure an archaeological watching brief so that excavations and other development works are observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority and in accordance with a written programme and specification, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.***
- B) The archaeological watching brief, recording, post excavation assessment, analysis and reporting shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed specification and timetable.***

C) Within 6 months of the completion of the watching brief a Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded

I would be pleased to discuss the above further.

Yours sincerely

Casper Johnson MCIfA FSA
Senior Archaeological Officer
Heritage Conservation