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Dear Mr Macholc,

Planning Application 3/2016/0974: Residential development including the erection of 275 dwellings, a local neighbourhood centre, access arrangements and associated landscaping/wildlife infrastructure; Land west of Preston Road, Longridge.

The above planning application is for the same site as application 3/2015/0099, which was refused consent and a subsequent planning appeal submitted. This application, the pre-application consultation of 2014 and an EIA scoping assessment of 2015, were assessed by Douglas Moir of the Lancashire County Archaeology Service. These consultations were answered by a recommendation for a pre-determination field evaluation of the site, so that an informed planning decision could be taken (e.g. email D Moir to S Kilmartin, RVBC, 10th June 2015). This recommendation, based on the presence of an unusual concentration of findspots of prehistoric tools and the presumed presence of associated settlement, echoes some of the findings of the heritage statement supplied in 2015 (L-P Archaeology, February 2015), but assigns a somewhat greater probability to the presence of significant remains.

Despite the above recommendations no field evaluation works are known to have been carried out in relation to this new application and the present proposals are not accompanied by a heritage statement.

Whilst not falling into the present site, a relevant piece of fieldwork was the holding of a watching brief during the construction of a water pipe from Daisy Barn, northwest of Longridge, to White Bull Main, Alston, Lancashire (SD 5856439429-SD 59875435257) in 2008. Part of this route ran in a northwest-southeast direction, c.200-300m southwest of the proposed development site boundary. The only remains found during this work were identified as post medieval culverts and ditches. It should however be noted that the report (Oxford Archaeology North 2009, p.31) states that the topsoil was not completely stripped within the pipe easement and it is thus perhaps not surprising that only gross remains of relatively recent date were observed.

No archaeological work is known to have accompanied the installation of the gas pipeline at the south end of the site noted in the application documentation.

The only other relevant archaeological project in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site noted in the Lancashire Historic Environment Record is the ALSF project examining '*Aggregate Extraction and the Geoarchaeological Heritage of the Lower Ribble, Lancashire*'. This large-scale project was undertaken jointly by Oxford Archaeology North and the University of Liverpool Geography Department between May 2005 and December 2006. The associated report and data outputs were produced in 2007 by Oxford Archaeology North. The project did not quite extend into the proposed development area, but its boundary approaches as close as Bolton Fold Farm, less than 100m to the south. One of the outputs of the project were a series of maps of archaeological potential – essentially the potential for the survival of significant buried remains – divided into the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods. At their closest approach to the proposed development site both Roman and medieval potential is classed as 'Low', but the prehistoric potential is classed as 'High' (eastwards from Bolton Fold) and 'Medium' (south from Bolton Fold). It would not seem unreasonable to extrapolate these classifications north into the proposed development site.

Given the information above, the size of the proposed development and the negative impact that this would have on buried archaeology, it would appear reasonable to remain consistent with the advice provided by Lancashire County Archaeology Service and to recommend that an archaeological field evaluation be undertaken before a planning decision is taken. This would also be consistent with the advice provided in the NPPF paragraph 128 which states:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. ... Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation."

If the council is not minded to proceed along these lines, it would be possible (but not recommended) for a planning condition to be applied to any consent granted requiring a full phased programme of archaeological investigation to be undertaken and the results of that work to be submitted, along with proposals for an appropriate scheme of impact mitigation, as part of the reserved matters application. It should be pointed out that this could mean that decisions by the council and developer are not fully informed and that this may lead to significant archaeological and other costs.

It is hoped that the above is self-explanatory, but please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely

Peter Iles