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Your ref: 3/2021/0311

Our ref: 3_2021_0311-LCC.DM.2

Date: 15th July 2021

F.A.O Adam Birkett

Dear Mr Macholc,

Planning Application: 3/2021/0311

Proposal to demolish and convert a number of agricultural buildings at Brockhall Farm, into 8 residential properties; construct a number of garages for the use of the residents; and redevelop the surrounding landscaping to incorporate parking, landscaping and amenity spaces for each property. Resubmission of 3/2020/0180. Brockhall Farm, Brockhall Village, Old Langho

Re: *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Historic Building Survey* (Oxford Archaeology North, June 2021).

The HET can confirm that the June 2021 version has satisfactorily addressed all of the comments made by the Historic Environment Team's in its previous advice to the Borough Council made in April 2021.

The main change between the original (January 2021) Assessment & Survey and the June 2021 version is that it demonstrates a better understanding of the regional significance of the site as a whole, as few model farms were constructed after 1900, and the use that many had as a means of providing institutional occupational therapy.

Of particular interest, however, is the significance of the 1920s(?) concrete silo, its presence a reflection of the growing requirements for fodder production in the first half of the twentieth century when large-scale dairy farming took off at an industrial scale, as an early example of the use of concrete for such a structure, and as a rare survival of such a structure, which has now been more clearly acknowledged.

Consequently the Historic Environment Team would now advise that the Borough Council should, as the silo is a building that would undoubtedly make the grade for any local list of historic buildings, and one which might potentially also be of sufficient significance and rarity that it merits consideration for designation (i.e. as a listed building), more fully consider how it would be possible for any proposed development to more closely meet the requirements of Core Strategy Policies ENV5 & DME4.

Demolition of the silo should therefore only be considered acceptable if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that preservation in situ, and this should not be taken to purely mean capable of development, is not possible due to construction/structural defects, that are definitively beyond repair, rather than simply in terms of the cost and how it might not fit into the current proposed layout. I would at this point draw your attention to the contents of NPPF paragraph 191 which are relevant in this matter.

As the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Historic Building Survey points out (section 7.1.11), "no detailed structural assessment of the date or makeup of the concrete has been undertaken", and such a (detailed) assessment is now considered necessary before any informed decision can be reached. As the same paragraph goes on to point out, even if a building is deemed as being of sufficient significance to merit designation it does not necessarily mean that such a building cannot be demolished, but the Council should have sufficient information to be able to come to any decision they do make.

Consideration should also be given to the feasibility of other options, such as preservation off site, i.e. might it be possible for the building to be gifted to a suitable Museum, such as for example, the Museum of Historic Buildings at Avoncroft, or the like, as well as the need for any further recording.

I would also further advise that the opinion of the LPA's Conservation Officer, if it hasn't been already, also be sought with regards to the desirability/need for the building to be retained.

Yours sincerely

Doug Moir

Planning Officer (Archaeology)
Historic Environment Team