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10 August 2022

SENT BY EMAIL

Re: 22/501335 – Land at Little Cheveney Farm, Sheephurst Lane Marden

Thank you for your letter consulting us on the above planning application for a solar farm.

The proposed development is within a rural area of the river valley of the Medway and west of the historic village of Marden. The site is situated on River Terrace Gravels and Alluvium. Both these deposits have potential to contain evidence of Early Prehistoric and later Prehistoric activity. There are no known archaeological sites of Roman or later date within the site but this may reflect limited nature of formal investigation rather than lack of occupation. There are certainly historic Post Medieval farms close to this site, some of which may be of Medieval origins.

The current landscape pattern reflects the elements identifiable on the 1st Ed OS map demonstrating land use of a flood plain with routeways connecting farms and larger settlements and respecting the smaller river channels and remnant woodland.

Although the HER does not reflect known prehistoric and historic activity, it is possible that there are Early Prehistoric remains within the gravels and alluvium and there may be prehistoric settlements surviving within the fields.

The application is supported by a Heritage Statement by Cotswolds Archaeology. The report is good and provides a reasonable assessment of the potential for archaeological remains. As mentioned in the archaeological report, there has been liaison with the applicant and archaeological agent. I agree that although I have encouraged pre-determination fieldwork in view of the paucity of known HER sites, a phased programme of geo-archaeological work to deal with Palaeolithic potential and a phased programme of archaeological work for Post Medieval and earlier potential post consent would be reasonable.

As such I recommend the following conditions are placed on any forthcoming consent:

- 1 *Prior to the commencement of development the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will secure:*
 - i *geo-archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and*
 - ii *further geo-archaeological and Palaeolithic investigation, recording and reporting, determined by the results of the evaluation, in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority;*
 - iii *programme of post excavation assessment and publication.*

Reason: To ensure that features of geo-archaeological and Palaeolithic interest are properly examined, recorded, reported and disseminated.

and

- 2 *Prior to the commencement of development the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will secure:*
 - i *archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and*
 - ii *further archaeological investigation, recording and reporting, determined by the results of the evaluation, in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority;*
 - iii *programme of post excavation assessment and publication.*

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined, recorded, reported and disseminated.

I would be pleased to discuss the above further.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Rogers
Senior Archaeological Officer
Heritage Conservation