

P/OUT/2023/02644 – Hybrid planning application, etc, Land west of Church Hill, and Land off Butts Close and Schoolhouse Lane, Marnhull

For the attention of Robert Lennis

Dear Robert

Thank you for consulting me on the archaeological implications of this proposed development.

It is good to see that the application is accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment (Wessex Archaeology's document ref: 265290.02). However, I cannot agree with the conclusions about further archaeological work.

I agree with the statement in paragraph 7.1.3 that the nature of any remains on the site cannot be confirmed due to a lack of previous investigation.

Paragraph 7.1.2 says that there are no indications that any remains would be of particular significance. I would counter this that there are also no indications that they are not. And because of the present uncertainty, I cannot agree with the view in paragraph 7.1.4 that archaeological monitoring would be the appropriate archaeological mitigation for the proposed development.

I would also add that archaeological monitoring of the whole development could well be a complicated and time-consuming matter that may not produce an appropriate record of archaeological remains anyway.

In cases where an archaeological assessment does not give a clear idea of the likely archaeological impact of a development, it is normal practice to follow this with an archaeological field evaluation. In my opinion, this would be appropriate in the present case.

Hence my advice is that the applicant should be requested to submit the results of an archaeological evaluation of the site, before the application is determined, in order for an informed planning decision to be made.

I would be glad to discuss the details of this evaluation further with all concerned.

Best wishes

Steve Wallis, Senior Archaeologist, Dorset Council

27th November 2023

