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6th March 2025

Dear Jonny

BSA2508 – LAND AT PAMPISFORD ROAD, GREAT ABINGTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Further to my instruction relating to your site in Great Abington, I write with a summary of the site's archaeological potential and likely heritage constraints following my initial assessment. My appraisal has been informed by data supplied by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and online sources. The latter has included the Historic England National Heritage List for England (NHLE), historic Ordnance Survey maps and aerial and street level views of the site. I have also had regard to the information you provided where the site area was considered as part of the 2021 HELAA.

The HER data confirms that the village has seen considerable development in recent decades, both residential and associated with Granta Park to the north. Archaeological work associated with development has confirmed that the area has seen activity from prehistory and during the Roman period, as might be expected in this part of England. Work at Granta Park has revealed Iron Age settlement remains in the form of multiple grain storage pits, whilst a Neolithic henge and Bronze Age round barrows have been identified north of Great Abington at the 'Four Wentways' roundabout site. I believe the Council had flagged the site's potential for prehistoric remains in past consideration.

Cambridge, Great Chesterford and Godmanchester all have Roman origins and the major Roman road the *Via Devana* runs approximately a mile north of the village. As ever, sub-surface archaeological remains which pre-date the extant, largely post-medieval landscape are concentrated in certain areas. It is most likely that the site itself was part of Great Abington's open field system in the medieval period, albeit no vestiges of ridge and furrow are now apparent on the surface of the pasture site field. The likely site of the manor house and church lie to the north and the later Abington Hall and church are the only two structures mentioned in the original Buildings of England edition.

Notably, the closest archaeological investigations to the site preceded construction of Moorfield Close, immediately south and east of the site. Four trenches were excavated by Pre-Construct Archaeology in 2017 on an area approximately half the size of the current site. A single undated ditch and pit were revealed and no further investigation was required ahead of the site's development.

Approximately 300 metres north east of the site, evaluation was completed ahead of development south of Linton Road, again by Pre-Construct Archaeology and after a geophysical survey, in 2018. This work recorded probably Mesolithic or Neolithic flint working adjacent to a palaeochannel (prehistoric watercourse), but only one undated ditch. Small amounts of pottery indicated activity nearby in the Bronze Age or Iron Age. This site has also now been developed, as 'Larkfield'.

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As with analogous development plots close to the site, it is likely that evaluation will be required in support of any future planning application for the site. This would be informed by desk based assessment and may involve geophysical survey, trial trenching and test pitting, given prehistoric potential. All work would be agreed in advance with the Cambridgeshire archaeology officer and undertaken in accordance with Written Schemes of Investigation (WSIs).

If significant sub-surface remains are revealed, it would be appropriate for the impact of development to be mitigated through further investigation, as with nearby sites. The adjacent trial trenching provides a strong indication that nothing of significance will be found.

It has been suggested that the site was once part of Abington Hall's park and late 19th century Ordnance Survey maps indicate the area was 'wood pasture', although it is unclear if this was part of the grounds of the hall. Aerial photographs and historic maps do not indicate that the site is likely to contain any extant heritage features of interest. Nothing is recorded for the site by the HER and any vestiges of ridge and furrow would rate as of negligible interest.

As the site is all one parcel of land, its development is unlikely to cause any substantial harm to its boundary hedges and trees which historic maps indicate are likely to be relatively recent. Post-medieval to modern changes to the landscape, including the loss of trees indicated by historic maps, expansion of housing south and east of the site, development of the farm to the west with modern buildings and modern development more widely mean that the site has no special historic landscape interest and does not retain the appearance of 'parkland'.

Great Abington's conservation area lies circa 250 metres north of the site at its closest point. A number of listed buildings lie within and beyond its boundaries, which define earlier parts of the village. The closest listed buildings to the site include a Grade II listed, 17th century converted dovecote to the west at Newhouse Farm. This is screened from the site by later structures at the farm and change within the site would not affect its significance.

To the east of the site, the closest listed buildings are the Grade II The Old Farm (108 High Street) and Farm Cottage (104 High Street). Although a '16th century' timber framed and thatched barn immediately west of Farm Cottage is recorded as Grade II listed for 'group value', this may be erroneous as no structure is shown in that location on 19th century maps.

Both the 16th century timber framed and pantile roofed Farm Cottage and its now residential outbuilding lie north east of the site and are screened from it by a block of woodland to the west and considerable vegetation within the curtilage. The 15th century and later Old Farm is also heavily enclosed by vegetation and faces onto High Street. This timber framed and thatched house is early, but is now flanked by later buildings to north and south, with houses east of High Street too.

Even allowing for the fact that The Old Farm may have owned and farmed the site land historically, any harm from development of the more recent site parcel would be at the very low end of less than substantial harm.

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I believe proposals for the site would include open space in the north, closest to the listed High Street structures and this and suitable boundary planting would likely reduce any harm to The Old Farm to negligible. I would agree with the 2021 HELAA that potential harm to listed buildings could be mitigated through appropriate scheme design.

No harm to the significance of Farm Cottage, its adjacent converted barn, or any more distant designated heritage assets is likely from change to their settings. This includes the conservation area and both the listed Abington Hall and Great Abington Church, with a belt of trees immediately west and north of the site.

In conclusion, I do not assess any significant archaeological or heritage constraint to the site being allocated and developed for housing in due course.

I trust this initial appraisal is useful, but please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries.

Yours sincerely

Ben Stephenson
Director