

Online Comment

Application H22-0861-18
Location Land adjacent: Church View 87 High Road Weston PE12 6RA
Proposal Construction of a single dwelling and garage

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For/Against Comments

The proposed development lies in an area of archaeological interest and previous proposals for this site have been granted subject to conditions requiring the developer to commission an archaeological scheme of works.

The Heritage Statement submitted in support of this application dismisses the impacts of the proposed development on the historic environment. Yet it describes neither the significance of the nearby Grade I Listed Church of St Mary or the crucially the contribution made by its setting, which also includes 7 Grade II Listed monuments, a Grade II Listed medieval cross (also designated as a Scheduled Monument), and a Grade II Listed lychgate all within the churchyard. Nor is there an assessment of the below ground impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest, and it is evident that the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record has not been consulted. Sidestepping these assessments that are required by the NPPF it concludes that there will be no impact on the setting of the church, and questions the "expensive exercise" of fulfilling the developer's obligation to record archaeology destroyed by the development.

The earliest evidence for the settlement of Weston is situated in this area northeast of the medieval parish church. Evidence for extensive Saxon activity was revealed during the construction of the Weston Bypass less than 50 m from the proposed development. The position of the proposed development between this area of known Saxon settlement and the church means there is a high possibility of material from this earliest period of the village's past being destroyed by the proposed development. It is for this reason that this office recommended that previous proposals for development on this site be subject to an archaeological condition to record any surviving remains before they are destroyed.

The Heritage Statement suggests that archaeological monitoring and recording undertaken during the construction of the neighbouring 87 High Road "failed to produce anything of interest." However, two undated ditches were revealed and recorded, which the archaeologist concluded may represent part of the Saxon complex revealed to the north, and this is supported by the lack of dating material (Saxon sites often include relatively few finds, making them particularly challenging to identify and interpret) and the fact that both features were sealed by a subsoil layer of probable medieval date. The proposed development is situated closer to the known Saxon remains discovered on the route of the bypass than No. 87 so it has an even greater potential to reveal significant archaeology from this poorly understood period of Weston's history.

For this reason the recommendation of this office remains unchanged, that the developer should be required to commission a Scheme of Archaeological Works (on the lines of 4.8.1 in the Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook. This should be secured by South Holland District Council's standard conditions AR01, 02 and 03.

"Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part)" - National Planning Policy Framework revised July 2018, section 16, paragraph 199.

Initially I envisage that this would involve monitoring of all groundwork's, with the ability to stop and fully record archaeological features.