



FAO: Planning Department,
Mid Sussex District Council

Application ref: DM/25/3020
Date: 4 December 2025

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVICE

RE: Land To The West Of Courthouse Farm, Copthorne Common, Copthorne

The application is for Outline planning application for the erection of an extra-care retirement community (Use Class C2) and community pavilion, including associated parking, outdoor amenity space, landscaping and drainage, with all matters reserved except for the new access proposed from Copthorne Common Road.

The West Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the proposed development is located in an area where no previously recorded intrusive archaeological investigations have taken place.

Two historic farmsteads are identified to the east of the proposed development site, Courthouse Farm (HER MWS9926) and Haynes Farm (HER MWS11209). The site is within the agricultural hinterland of both of these farmsteads and may contain associated post-medieval remains relating to agricultural processes, field division and/or land management.

Beyond this, the HER contains very few records in the vicinity of the site, and no records at all of intrusive archaeological work, as stated above. This lack of previous work and information within the HER makes assessing the archaeological potential of the proposed development site a difficult prospect.

What is clear, however, is that any archaeological remains that are on the proposed development site would be negatively impacted by the groundworks associated with proposals.

Given the above, I recommend that a programme of archaeological evaluation is undertaken to fully assess the archaeological potential of the development site. The results of the evaluation could then inform on any mitigation work, if required.

To understand the potential for, and significance of, archaeological deposits impacted by the proposal, a programme of trial trenching followed by excavation is being recommended in line with paragraph 218 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and Mid Sussex District Plan policy D34. A recognised team of professionals should undertake the archaeological work. The archaeological potential beneath the site needs to be further understood by a programme of trial trenching. Should this reveal archaeological deposits it could be followed by further targeted excavation/mitigation; this could be outlined in further detail by a brief from this office to inform a Written Scheme of Investigation.



In view of the above, I recommend that the following conditions are placed on any permission:

Archaeological trial trenching and excavation

- (1) No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until a programme of archaeological investigation has been secured in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted by the applicant, for approval by the Local Planning Authority.
- (2) No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the completion of the programme of archaeological investigation identified in the WSI defined in 1 above, and any subsequent mitigation has been agreed.
- (3) The applicant will submit a final archaeological report or (if appropriate) a Post Excavation Assessment report and/or an Updated Project Design for approval by the Local Planning Authority. This shall be submitted within 6 months of the date of completion of the archaeological fieldwork unless otherwise agreed in advance by the Local Planning Authority.

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Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter