



FAO: Planning Department,
Mid Sussex District Council

Application ref: DM/26/1792

Date: 4 August 2026

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVICE

RE: Land South West Of Havelock Farm, Selsfield Road, Ardingly, Haywards Heath

The application is for Installation of new structures and accessibility improvements to create a new Wild Play facility and associated works.

The West Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the proposed development is located in an area with the potential for significant archaeological remains to survive.

The site lies within the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden of Wakehurst Place, an early/mid twentieth century collector's garden that has been enlarged and further developed since 1965 (HER DWS398). Evidence of earlier garden features may survive on the development site and be impacted by the proposals.

Additionally, archaeological work undertaken nearby to the north-east uncovered significant prehistoric features and finds, including an oven dating from the Late Bronze Age (HER MWS7304). Related features may extend into the area of the proposals.

Given the above I recommend a programme of archaeological work is undertaken on the proposed development site to assess the presence of and record any archaeological deposits. Ideally this would comprise a programme of archaeological trenching undertaken prior to any development works, secured by condition, targeted on the areas where groundworks are proposed. The results of the trenching would inform on any mitigation.

Should trenching not be practicable given the current overgrowth/trees (many of which appear to be being retained) then this office would be happy to discuss an alternative form of archaeological investigation with the applicant or their appointed archaeological contractor.

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:

RECOMMENDATION: 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.**

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This advice has been provided by Place Services on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council.

Please note:

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

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.

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