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Date: 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Dear David,

**Re. Installation and operation of a solar farm including co-located energy storage facilities, onsite substation, ancillary infrastructure and landscaping.- Land To The West Of The A507 Between Cottered And Cromer Hertfordshire SG9 9PU**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Thank you for consulting us on the above application.

Please note that the following advice is based on the policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework

The proposed development site within a very large area of agricultural land with several archaeological remains within and immediately outside of its boundaries. These include the projected route of the Roman Road from Baldock to Braughing (Historic Environment Record no. 27665) as well as the approximate locations of a Saxon 'execution place' (HER no. 11822) and the medieval St. Paul's Chapel (HER 13118). In addition, the fields to the northwest of the development area have seen numerous examples of metal finds dating from at least the Late Iron Age (ex. HER nos. 19401) to Medieval Period (ex. HER no.24779), with a large concentration of Roman copper-alloy coins to note (ex. HER nos.19401-19407,19409-19415 etc.). Several flint blades and flakes have also been identified, dating as far back as the Mesolithic to Neolithic and Bronze Age periods (ex. HER nos.26042, 26043). These finds suggest prolonged activity within the site and study area, particular around the projected route of the Roman Road.

The Geophysical Survey Report submitted with the application (Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd., 2024) concludes on page 6 that: "*Several anomalies are interpreted as of uncertain origin but on balance these too are considered most likely to be natural in origin. However, a potential anthropogenic cause for some of these anomalies cannot be entirely dismissed.*" Although the study finds a low archaeological potential on the site, this assessment is based on the Geophysical Survey only. The immediate area around the site is known to have the potential to contain finds and features from the Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval periods, especially around the Roman Road, which is projected to pass through Sector 3 (as labelled in the report) of the proposed development area.

Section 3 also contains the approximate location of the Saxon execution place and site of St. Paul's Chapel and there is a possibility that the Geophysical survey identified these sites in their anomalies of uncertain origin, specifically U2 and or U8 as labelled on Illustration 7 of the report.

The site is of substantial size (c.85ha), and historic mapping suggests that it has been in very long term agricultural use. Although ploughing may have caused some truncation, it is likely to have had a minor negative archaeological impact (as may the introduction of field drains). Any archaeological remains present may therefore be well preserved.

Given this, the proposed development site should be regarded as having the potential to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest (NPPF para 207).

However, information about the significance of buried archaeology that may be present within the proposed development area, and the impact of any development, is not yet available.

We therefore advise that an additional form of geophysical survey be undertaken. The geophysical survey, more specifically electrical resistance or earth resistance survey should focus on Sector 3 of the development area, in order to provide sufficient information about the significance of heritage assets that may be affected by the development. This work should be carried out prior to determination of the application.

The results of this additional survey would determine whether any further archaeological work would be deemed necessary, either prior to the determination of the application, or following planning consent, should such consent be granted. Should the evaluation identify non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, these should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets (NPPF para 213, fn 75).

This office would be happy to discuss the scope of the above works further with the applicant or the applicant's agent.

I hope that you will be able to accommodate the above recommendations.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Peri Horsley  
Historic Environment Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS  
Environmental Sustainability

*Hertfordshire LEADS provides Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology, Design and Sustainability support to planning departments in Hertfordshire.*