



Mr Jay Smith
Northumberland National Park
Eastburn
South Park
Hexham
Northumberland
NE46 1BS

Direct Dial: [REDACTED]

Our ref: P01088231

1 August 2019

Dear Mr Smith

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**DYKEHEAD FARM, ROCHESTER, NORTHUMBERLAND, NE19 1RD
Application No. 19NP0060**

Thank you for your letter of 12 July 2019 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

This development lies within the site of High Rochester Roman fort, a site of exceptional archaeological significance, which was one of the so-called outpost forts that protected the Hadrian's Wall frontier to the south, and for more than 100 years represented the most northerly fort of the Roman Empire.

The archaeological and historic significance of this site is such that it is been protected as a scheduled monument, a designation given to archaeological sites of national significance. For this reason we are grateful that the applicant involved Historic England at pre-application stage, having already given careful thought as to how to address the archaeological sensitivity of the site.

Direct archaeological impacts

The application commits to the principle of a foundation cast on the existing surface of the ground without excavation. This will clearly avoid any direct impact on the archaeological remains present in the fort.

I have presumed also that no underground services would be required for the development - it would be desirable to have this explicitly confirmed, but provided this is the case then this would avoid any direct archaeological impacts.



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Impact on the setting of the Roman fort

Undoubtedly the proposed shed would be visible in some views of the Roman fort, and add a further 'built' element to this landscape. However, having visited the site and looked at the proposal, in our view this visibility will not harm the setting of the scheduled site.

The fort itself has a number of structures, including a row of cottages and a very interesting bastle house, and had more in the relatively recent past. Added to this are the field walls, some following the line of the fort and other cutting across it, which divide up the space and give much of the fort and its surroundings a strong visual character. This creates a very harmonious landscape, in which the Roman is a strong visual element allowing understanding of the placement of the fort in relation to the landscape it controlled, but where the gradual evolution of the area from the post-Roman to the modern period is reflected. It is against this backdrop of a multi-period landscape that the proposal must be examined.

The site chosen for the development seems to be a good one in this regard - it places it within a modest close or field, and will be mainly hidden by the existing drystone walls and a small plantation, whilst visually it will read as part of the later history of the site, blending with the plantation and the nearby houses.

Given this historical and visual context, although visible in some views into and out of the fort, the ability to understand Roman land use and military planning in locating and operating the fort will not be harmed by the proposed shed, whilst the site, partial screening and existing built elements here means that it will also blend with its surroundings. Given this, I do not believe the proposal will cause harm to the setting of the scheduled fort.

Recommendation

Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds.

Given our judgement on a lack of harm to the site of the Roman fort at Rochester and its setting, in our view the proposal would not require evaluation against paragraphs 194-196 of the NPPF.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decision in due course.

Yours sincerely


Mike Collins



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Historic England

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