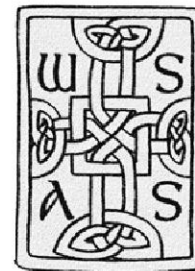


Our ref: 7/3/2/Cons 34214  
Your ref: 16/02183/PPP  
WoSASdoc: 16\_02183.doc  
Date: 23 August 2016  
Contact: Martin O'Hare  
Direct dial: 0141 287 8333

WEST of SCOTLAND  
ARCHAEOLOGY  
SERVICE



Planning Services  
Argyll & Bute Council  
Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay  
1A Manse Brae  
Lochgilphead  
PA31 8RD

231 George Street, Glasgow G1 1RX  
Tel: 0141 287 8332-5  
enquiries@wosas.glasgow.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

**Re: Prior Notification 16/02183/PPP - Site for the erection of dwelling house, land north west of Oakfield, Lochgilphead, Argyll and Bute, PA31 8NQ**

I refer to the above application for planning consent, which appeared on a recent weekly list of applications registered with the Council. I have downloaded details of the proposal from the Council's online planning system, and having compared these against information contained in the Historic Environment Record (HER) and with available cartographic sources, I would like to make the following comments.

Although the new house proposed under the current application would be located immediately to the north of the walled garden of the estate, I would not consider construction of a new building on this site to raise a particular archaeological issue in itself. However, the plans supplied in support of the proposal also provide details of the access route that would be used. This runs past the site of a standing stone, identified in the records of Argyll County Council in 1914 as being located 'at the entrance to the garden by the bridge' (this is separate from the stone recorded from immediately to the west of the former stable-block of Oakfield, the position of which is shown on current OS maps of the area). Staff from the Ordnance Survey, who visited the area in 1977, recorded the presence of two stones at NGR 185590, 688550, the largest of which was 1.1m high with an average width of 0.4m, while the other was 0.4m high by 0.3m. The OS record notes that they were situated either side of an old path that lead to a footbridge about 8.0m to their west. The OS suggested that the position of these stones, apparently marking a footpath, suggested that they are not prehistoric; however, this has not been confirmed. It is possible that one stone may be of prehistoric origin, with the other having been erected at a later date.

In terms of the current application, the recorded position of these stones places them immediately adjacent to the section of access track proposed for improvement. The document provided in support of the proposal states that *'access across the last -200m to the walled garden from Oakfield House is via a well-established single dirt track through the woodland, crossing a narrow burn via a cast iron bridge in good repair. The track shall be upgraded to gravel and extended up the E wall of the garden, which will also benefit the activities of the walled garden and wider forest management'*. From the information in this document, it is not clear what would be involved in this upgrade, i.e., whether it would simply be a matter of depositing gravel on the existing the track in order to improve the running surface, or whether ground disturbance would also be required to widen or re-align the track. If it is the latter, there would be some potential for this ground disturbance to expose and remove buried archaeological deposits, which could potentially provide information on whether the standing stone in the vicinity of the bridge is of prehistoric origin.

Government policy on the treatment of archaeological remains in the planning process is that planning authorities should ensure that prospective developers arrange for any archaeological issues raised by their proposals to be adequately addressed at an appropriate stage. Given the relatively small scale of

the proposed development and the accepted uncertainty over the potential survival of significant remains, I do not consider that it would be reasonable to require archaeological fieldwork by the applicant in advance of determination of the application in principle. However, I would consider the possibility of the survival of some significant archaeological remains within the development footprint to be strong enough to recommend some action in mitigation of any possible loss of archaeological resource. Should the Council be minded to grant consent to the application, I would therefore recommend the attachment of the following condition to allow for an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be tied into any development works. This has been worded to reflect recent enforcement experience and current best practice:

*“The developer shall secure the implementation of an archaeological watching brief, to be carried out by an archaeological organisation acceptable to the Planning Authority, during all ground disturbance. The retained archaeological organisation shall be afforded access at all reasonable times and allowed to record, recover and report items of interest and finds. A method statement for the watching brief will be submitted by the applicant, agreed by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, and approved by the Planning Authority prior to commencement of the watching brief. The name of the archaeological organisation retained by the developer shall be given to the Planning Authority and to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service in writing not less than 14 days before development commences.”*

This condition would be implemented by means of the applicant or developer appointing a professional archaeological contractor to prepare a method statement. This is basically a project design document which sets out in detail the scope of work that will take place on the site, and makes provision for further fieldwork, post-excavation analysis and publication in the event that significant archaeological deposits are encountered during the initial phase of monitoring. The watching brief would be required on the initial stage of any ground disturbance associated with upgrade of the access track in the vicinity of the recorded position of the standing stones, particularly in areas where the existing track would need to be widened or re-aligned. This would include the removal of turf, topsoil and other surfacing, down to the intersection with the natural subsoil or first archaeological deposit. If it is the case that the existing track can be upgraded by simply depositing gravel on the current route, without any alteration or ground disturbance, then I would accept that there would be no need for monitoring on this element. It may be the case that this initial stage of work would be sufficient to demonstrate that no archaeological remains are present on the site, and if this is the case, no further work would be required beyond this monitoring. If buried remains were identified, there would then be a requirement for further stages of archaeological works in order to properly excavate and record them before the development progressed. This could include further excavation, post excavation analyses and publication of the results, if warranted. However, given the relatively small footprint of the proposed development, it is unlikely that the mitigation measures required will be extensive.

Yours faithfully

West of Scotland Archaeology Service