



Re: Application 19/00067/OUT, land at Grange Rd. Lawford, Essex, CO11 2ND

The Essex Society for Archaeology and History wishes to oppose this proposed housing development, for the following reasons:-

The proposed development will adversely affect the setting of a Scheduled Monument, a nationally significant Neolithic site.

A range of archaeological remains will be, or are likely to be, affected by the development. These remains, besides their intrinsic interest, are pertinent to the setting and significance of the Scheduled Monument. They are part of a wider cropmark landscape and have not been adequately considered in the Heritage Statement submitted in support of this application.

The Scheduled Monument is a late Neolithic site and excavations have produced an exceptional range of both flintwork and pottery. The pottery is one of the largest assemblages of Grooved Ware in the east of England, of considerable importance for our understanding of this distinctive ceramic style. Generally considered as a hengiform monument, the peculiar nature of the Lawford site, with its relatively complex developmental sequence, has defied neat classification. It can now be seen as part of a wider pattern of broadly similar sites (e.g. Bradley 2007, 132-33). Of particular significance may be its similarity, in terms of developmental sequence, to a site close to the former Wantsum channel on the other side of the Greater Thames Estuary (Healy 2012, 16). The Lawford site's location, close to the head of the Stour estuary is significant (Cleal 1999, 5), and it forms part of an extensive cropmark landscape along the Stour valley (Brown *et al* 2002). This complex landscape involved the creation of monuments (of which Lawford is one) and their integration into patterns of enclosure and field systems which developed over many centuries. Accordingly the setting of the Lawford Scheduled Monument is especially sensitive. The proposed development would inevitably affect the monuments setting, both in terms of its relationship with other buried archaeological remains and by affecting views, to and from the Scheduled Monument, particularly to the south. The known and suspected archaeological remains within the proposed development area, will relate both to the use and development of the Scheduled Monument itself, and to its integration into the wider development of the ancient cropmark landscape in the Stour Valley and around the Stour estuary.

In the unfortunate event of planning permission being granted, considerable care will be required in designing the form and location of planting and landscape buffers to ensure that

the open setting of the Scheduled Monument is retained as far as possible. In particular any substantial groundworks for instance attenuation ponds, will be very destructive of archaeological remains. In order to minimise such damage, the precise form and location of such features should not be decided until archaeological trial trenching has been undertaken. Excavations to mitigate damage to archaeological remains caused by the construction of housing and its associated infrastructure will require a clear research design. Amongst other things this should aim to elucidate the setting of the Scheduled Monument and the impact of its construction and use in the context of the wider cropmark landscape of the Stour.

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14, The Chase, Boreham, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 3DY, 8th February 2019

References

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