

A National Amenity Society

Mr Philip Mullineux
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Shropshire Council
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7th February 2022

Land north of Whittington Road, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 1JQ. Application No. 20/01033/EIA

Dear Mr Mullineux,

Thank you for notifying The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) about the above case. Based on the information supplied with this application, we offer the following observations and advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Significance

The significance of Old Oswestry Hillfort has been ably articulated in several documents including Historic England's Scheduling description and Reasons for Designation. It also features in a variety of academic research that sets out to examine the relationship between various prehistoric monuments and landscapes within Wales and the Welsh Marches. The hillfort is one of several highly visible and significant prehistoric monuments in the region and is a particularly well-preserved example. It is also a monument that is highly regarded by the local community and therefore retains high communal value. The setting of these monuments is key to appreciating and understanding them and any encroachment into setting by development will inevitably be harmful. Despite its proximity to the urban fringe of Oswestry, the hillfort retains a strong open and rural setting that make a critical contribution to the setting and significance of the monument.

Comments

The CBA have consistently objected to the development of this parcel of land. The CBA maintain our strong objection to this development, as expressed in our letters of 18th July 2019, 1st October 2019 and 25th March 2020.

This is a highly contentious scheme, which has provoked massive and sustained outcry from the local community. The CBA support and echo the voices of local residents who do not want a housing development to cause unnecessary harm to the setting and significance of Oswestry Hillfort.

The inclusion of the application site within the 2015 SAMDev strategy does not necessitate the development of this site. We note it is both possible and highly preferable to achieve Oswestry's required housing numbers through developing other allocated sites. The only unique attribute of this site is its proximity to one of the most impressive Iron Age monuments in the British Isles.

Development in this location would cause considerable harm to the setting of an extremely important feature of national importance and to a much loved local asset, which can and should be avoided.

Shropshire published its [Cultural Strategy 2021-2031](#) in 2020, in which the importance of Shropshire's heritage and historic environment is identified as a key tenet of the county's unique and diverse cultural identity. Not only is Oswestry Hillfort a hugely important and highly valued part of Oswestry's identity by local residents, your LPA's own document recognises that "The value of the natural and historic heritage offer [in Shropshire] is significant, with the economic return of visits to the environment estimated to be £100m per year. These are therefore important sectors for the local economy and should be supported going forward." Development of the application site would be contrary to a number of the key priorities set out in this document, especially 'enjoy', 'explore', 'live' and 'nurture' as set out on page 11. Encroaching on the Iron Age Hillfort with a residential development, that could be located elsewhere, flies in the face of the recognition that Shropshire's high-quality landscapes are valued, and the pledge to enhance them for future generations.

Recommendation

The CBA continues to consider this development within the setting of the Scheduled Old Oswestry Hillfort to be harmful to significance of the scheduled monument. The CBA strongly objects to this application and we urge the local planning authority to refuse this application because it will result in unnecessary harm to the significance and setting of the Scheduled Old Oswestry Hillfort. The application is contrary to paragraphs 199, 200 & 201 of the NPPF.

I trust these comments are useful to you; please keep the CBA informed of any developments with this case.

Kind Regards,



Catherine Bell. MA (cons), ACIfA
Listed Buildings Caseworker for England

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) is the national amenity society concerned with protection of the archaeological interest in heritage assets. Local planning authorities have a duty to notify the CBA of applications for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition, under the procedures set out in, **Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification To Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of state (England) direction 2021.**