Historic England

Ms Robyn Kerrigan
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 3TN

[redacted]

Our ref: P01593608

27 June 2025

Dear Ms Kerrigan

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

25 Hollow Lane, Ramsey Huntingdon PE26 1DE
Application No. 25/10125/HHFUL

Thank you for your letter of 9 June 2025 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
The Significance of the Historic Environment
The application site lies within the boundary of the scheduled monument 'Booths Hill, Ramsey Abbey' (List Entry Number 1004643). The application site also lies within Ramsey Conservation Area.

The monument includes the earthwork and buried archaeological remains of a 12th century motte within a moat. It is thought that this small castle was erected by Geoffrey de Mandeville for his own use when he took possession of Ramsey Abbey and quartered his soldiers there in c.1140 - 1144. The mound, which goes by the name of Booth's Hill, has been adapted as an icehouse in recent years.

The significance of the scheduled monument lies in a combination of its surviving form and relationship to nearby scheduled monument 'Ramsey Abbey (remains of)' (List Entry Number 1006838), along with its historic and archaeological interest. The monument has a high potential to contain buried archaeological remains which will hold important evidence relating to the use and development of the motte and its surrounding landscape.

Booth's Hill is also a key element of the Ramsey Conservation Area. Booth's Hill contributes to the significance of the conservation area which in turn forms an important part of its setting.

Historic England is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by us may therefore become publicly available. For information about our use of your personal data visit: historicengland.org.uk/ /privacy

Impact of the Proposals on the Historic Environment
Groundworks for the proposed development, including foundations and services, have potential to have a localised impact on buried archaeological remains within the scheduled monument and cause some harm to their significance.

The proposed development is unlikely to have any appreciable adverse impact on the setting of the scheduled monument.

Legislative and Planning Policy Context
a) The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended)
Scheduled monuments are legally protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended).

Paragraph 16 of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) policy statement on Scheduled Monuments (2013) states that, *It is a criminal offence to demolish, destroy, damage, remove, repair, alter or add to a Scheduled Monument, or to undertake flooding or tipping operations on land in, on or under which there is a Scheduled Monument, unless prior consent has been obtained from the Secretary of State in the form of Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC)*'.

Paragraph 20 of the policy statement goes on to say that for, '*works proposed for development-, conservation- or presentation-related purposes, the Secretary of State has particular regard to the following principles:*

- *only in wholly exceptional cases will consent be granted for works that could result in substantial harm to, or loss of, the significance of a Scheduled Monument; and*

- *in cases that would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a Scheduled Monument the harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.*

Though relevant, the potential to record evidence of the past is not considered by the Secretary of State to be an important factor in determining if SMC should be granted in such circumstances. Consequently it will normally be given little weight'.

The any ground disturbance within the scheduled monument would constitute works to the monument. Consequently, the proposed works would require Scheduled Monument Consent under Section 2(1) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended).

The requirement for Scheduled Monument Consent is separate from, and irrespective of, any requirement for planning permission.

Historic England is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by us may therefore become publicly available. For information about our use of your personal data visit: historicengland.org.uk/ /privacy

b) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF Dec 2024)
The NPPF (Dec 2024) sets out in paragraph 207 that, 'in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting'.

It goes on to state in paragraph 212 that, 'when considering the impact of a proposed development upon the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight to be given to the monument's conservation' irrespective of the level of any potential harm.

Paragraph 213 establishes that, 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification'.

Paragraph 215 adds that, 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal'.

Historic England's Position
The submitted Design, Access and Heritage Statement fails to mention that the application site lies in within the scheduled monument 'Booths Hill, Ramsey Abbey'. The Design, Access and Heritage Statement does not therefore fully consider the impact of the proposals on the scheduled monument as required by NPPF paragraph 207. Consequently, the planning application does not present a 'clear and convincing justification' for the harm that would be caused to the scheduled monument as required by paragraph 213 of the NPPF or set out any public benefits so that these can be weighed against the harm under paragraph 214.

Based on our own assessment of the application, Historic England considers that the proposed development would result in harm to the significance of the 'Booths Hill, Ramsey Abbey' scheduled monument. Historic England's view is that the level of harm would be likely to be at the lower end of the spectrum of 'less than substantial harm' in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework.

In addition to planning permission, the proposed development would require Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport in accordance with Section 2(1) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended). https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/consents/smc/.

The application for Scheduled Monument Consent should include a revised version of the Design, Access and Heritage Statement.

Historic England is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by us may therefore become publicly available. For information about our use of your personal data visit: historicengland.org.uk/ /privacy

Historic England

Recommendation

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

However, we consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of the NPPF, in particular paragraphs 207, 213 and 215.

We also wish to remind that applicant that they will also need to apply for Scheduled Monument Consent.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Historic England, Brooklands, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BU
Telephone 01223 582749 | historicengland.org.uk

Historic England is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by us may therefore become publicly available. For information about our use of your personal data visit: historicengland.org.uk/ /privacy