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SENT BY EMAIL

Dear Ms Potter

Re: PA/2025 - 17 – 19 and 21 Church Street Wye

Thank you for your letter consulting us on the above planning application for conversion of 19 and 21 into to 2 dwellings; single-storey and partial 1st floor rear extension following demolition of existing extension; changes to fenestration; alterations to rear parking courtyard to create private gardens; partial demolition of garage and conversion to an annex building with associated landscaping.

The site of proposed works lies within the historic core of Wye, just south of the church and on the main street leading towards the church. Wye is considered to be an important minster town which developed south of St Gregory & St Martins Church and Collegiate and thrived as a medieval and post-medieval market town. Through appropriate heritage assessment, the application building now seems to be medieval in origin with many subsequent redevelopment phases and it is suggested it may have been a medieval hall house, which can be high status merchant dwellings and places of business. Medieval building fabric, fixtures and fittings have been identified and it is highly likely that further Medieval and Post Medieval structural and cultural remains are obscured by 19th and 20th century façade. There is potential for structures, features and fixtures reflecting Medieval construction marks and techniques, as well as structural evidence of different functions, survive within the building. There may be evidence of earlier structures, given this site would have been intensively used from at least the 13th century if not before. The building seems to be a rich and multi-phased archaeological resource with potential for considerable archaeological complexity and importance, perhaps more than is reflected in the listed building description. The building is designated heritage asset and all stakeholders need to be aware that the significance of the building may be substantially greater than previously understood.

As mentioned above, the application building is situated within the historic core of the medieval town of Wye but there is evidence of considerable prehistoric and Roman occupation and industrial activity to the west and around the Churchfield area. Anglo-Saxon remains have been located within Wye and it may be that the town was an Early Medieval settlement too, at a crossing point of the Stour. Evidence of Medieval or earlier remains may survive on the site, currently buried beneath the surface. There is high potential for prehistoric, Roman and Early Medieval remains to survive within the site, especially within the current rear courtyard.

The application is supported by a detailed heritage assessment and this is very welcome. There is an Archaeological DBA and a Heritage Statement by Canterbury Archaeological Trust. Both reports are of a high standard and detailed with relevant comments and recommendations. Both reports are acceptable. The Archaeological DBA provides a clear description of the potential for prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon remains as well as evidence of the potential origins of the building being a probable medieval hall-house – a high status “merchant”’s building, with several phases of redevelopment and re-use. There is mention of an actual Historic Building Survey by CAT but this has not been submitted. This is likely to be a very important guiding document and needs to be reviewed to ensure there is sufficient information to guide proposed building works. Can the applicant be asked to provide a copy of the HB Survey Report urgently.

It would be preferable for both buried archaeological issues and archaeology within the designated building itself to be understood prior to determination of this application. In view of the developing significance of the building it is essential that the heritage assessments are used to guide the development proposals and works. The re-development of this building may aim to secure its reuse, which is welcome, but there needs to be thorough consideration of the proposed alterations to ensure the integrity, character, complexity and significance of the building is not detrimentally affected. It would be preferable for the development to identify the heritage elements and seek to preserve, conserve and where possible enhance the heritage asset.

The applicant has provided some sound and reasonable reports. These may be sufficient predetermination assessment, subject to comments by the District Conservation Officer, and subject to the receipt of the CAT Historic Building Survey Report.

Subject to the District Conservation Officer finding the proposed scheme acceptable, archaeological issues could be addressed through conditions. In view of the superficial proposed groundworks to the rear, including the replacement extension and outbuildings, it would be precautionary to have a phased programme of archaeological works, including test pits within the rear area, to establish the presence/absence, depth and significance of archaeological remains. The results of test pitting could then provide guidance on the development works and ensure that the methodology of groundworks is mindful of archaeological issues.

Archaeological issues within the building can be covered by the integration of informed archaeological monitoring within all proposed works, with provision for retention and conservation where appropriate. Proposed works need to avoid detrimental impact on the archaeological resource and must have a flexible approach to allow for minor design changes if significant archaeology features are revealed.

Subject to comments from the District Conservation Officer, I recommend the following conditions are placed on any forthcoming consent:

- 1 *Prior to commencement of development the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will secure the implementation of*
- i archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and*
 - ii following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority*
 - iii programme of post excavation and publication*

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded and that due regard is had to the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains.

and

- 2 *Prior to commencement of development, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will:*
- i) agree an Archaeological Buildings Mitigation Strategy and Methodology of Works; and*
 - ii) secure the implementation of an archaeological buildings watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the development building works are observed and items of archaeological interest and finds are identified, assessed and, where significant, preserved, conserved and recorded. The archaeological buildings watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification, adhering to the Archaeological Buildings Mitigation Strategy and Methodology of Works which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly identified, examined and where appropriate, preserved and conserved, and fully recorded.

I would be happy to discuss any of the above further.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Rogers
Senior Archaeological Officer
Heritage Conservation