



RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY & RECORD SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 700273

Rutland County Museum, Catmose Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HW

Website: www.rutlandhistory.org

ST GEORGE'S BARRACKS

Since the announcement of the repurposing of St George's Barracks, Rutland Local History & Record Society has been providing members of Rutland County Council and the public with information about resources available which will enable a proper understanding of the heritage aspects of the proposed development at North Luffenham to be achieved. These include heritage planning policy and conservation matters as well as the county's Historic Environment Record. The Society also presented this information at the Parish Council Forum held at the RCC Offices in 2019. We listed resources we have available as a Society and at the Rutland County Museum, which include maps useful for compiling a heritage mapping sequence.

As a Society we would ask for a robust and comprehensive Heritage Statement for any development proposals, which should include both designated and non-designated values for the entire site. The project website alludes to only a small proportion of the available heritage information, mainly relating to modern history. It makes no mention of many of the entries on the Historic Environment Record, one of the most important of which is the early Medieval (Anglo-Saxon) cemetery near the Main Gatehouse, which is significant as one of a number of high status burial sites in England. As yet, the real size of this cemetery is unknown as it was discovered when a sandpit was dug for aggregate in the early 20th century; swords, shields and jewellery were amongst the material recovered; many of the finds are retained in the collections of the Rutland County Museum. Currently the Portable Antiquities Scheme has a register of other finds in the area which add to the history of the site. The area may also include an Anglo-Saxon Moot Point (meeting place) as well as remains of the village of Normanton which was removed to enable the building of the manorial house of Normanton Park and its estate buildings. We would expect a competent heritage specialist to consult fully with the Leicestershire & Rutland Historic & Natural Environment Team and its archaeological planning officers and then to provide a full heritage assessment of the area and its multi-period context which also includes prehistoric and Roman aspects. It is not sufficient just to rely on the limited presence of modern heritage assets.

The maps on the consultation website are dated 1928, but there are many earlier maps which need to be consulted in order to assess the site properly.

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With regard to Character and Conservation, the statement on the website notes that "More recent developments have failed to reflect local built character, and have resulted in poor quality, incongruous additions to our towns and villages". As a Society we have previously written to express concern at the lack of a Conservation Officer in post in Rutland, since such a competent planning specialist would have helped to avoid failure of this kind. We would also suggest that the *Strategic Stone Study for Rutland* published by Historic England and the British Geological Survey is consulted. The Character section of the website has alluded to this, but minor stone quarries such as "Uppingham Stone" have been wrongly attributed to this area of Rutland; it also states that "thatch" is the norm, but today it is not.

The Minerals Report published by Evolution Geological does not mention the Edith Weston Stone outcrop which is comparable to Collyweston Stone and a possible valuable resource for heritage building. We note that in this report the authors state that the bore-hole spacing that was carried out for the geology of the area "is such that no real statistical relationship can be established between the holes. This means that the level of confidence in any resource figure should be considered as low". We would therefore ask that the Council be mindful that a valuable heritage resource could in fact be available.

At the moment we wish to comment in order to explain the heritage resources available and which have not yet, it seems, been appropriately referred to. From our work with Parish Councillors we know that they are unaware of many of the resources and also of statutory obligations for heritage which complement the bigger project; this also applies to other Council members.

We have explained to the various Parish Councillors that we are not in a position to replace RCC specialist personnel, such as Conservation Officers and the appropriate planning personnel, but we can comment and provide advice where necessary by utilising our experience in the Rutland heritage sector. We would expect a full archaeological report of the area to be submitted and investigation carried out where necessary in advance of any development.

We would also point out that as part of National Planning Policy PPG16 the developer must, in advance of any works, pay for a specialist to carry out archaeological investigation, if the County Archaeologist reports that this must be done. This could be an excellent opportunity for community involvement in the evaluation and examination of a site and a sustainable asset for post-excavation finds. Provision for the post-excavation storage of finds and possible display must be written into any brief. Excellent management skills are required for this.

The historical and archaeological value of this site and its potential should not be underestimated.

Debbie Frearson
Chair (on behalf of Rutland Local History and Record Society)
21 August 2020