

Our ref: MON1924/JBHD

CURATORIAL DIVISION

Development Control Manager  
Monmouthshire County Council  
Planning Section  
County Hall  
CWMBRAN  
NP44 2XH

15<sup>th</sup> February 2012

FAO: Craig O'Connor

Dear Sir

**Re: Proposed Single Storey Extension and Removal of External Fire Escape:  
1, Old Dixton Road, Monmouth.  
Pl.App.No.: 2012/00028.**

We identified a possible archaeological issue for this planning application when we inspected your weekly planning list, consequently we have consulted the detailed information contained on your website, **the proposal has an archaeological restraint.**

Information in the Historic Environment Record shows that the site of the proposed development adjoins the Medieval tower of the Eastern (or Dixton) gate within the walls of the Medieval town. The gate itself was demolished during the 18<sup>th</sup> century when a turnpike was built, and the remains of the tower are incorporated into the Old Nag's Head public house. Murage grants of 1295 and 1315 give a date for the planning of the defences around the town, and the walling and gates were maintained until the late medieval and early post-medieval period. Stylistically, the gate tower appears to date from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and has 19<sup>th</sup> century work in the same red sandstone to the upper storey, whilst the lower is earlier and has a battered base. Recent archaeological work nearby has identified lengths of the town ditch, a wide and deep ditch positioned outside the walls to provide an additional defensive barrier; it is likely that this passes through the area of number One, towards the river, and that the extension will be located in this area. The depth of the ditch is known to be at least two metres and, as the fill is formed by material that has built up over time, is a mix of voids and densities that may be soft and unstable. The supporting information contains no geotechnical results, which would also inform on the nature of the archaeology.

The supporting information also contains a heritage statement, but this does not define the impact of the proposals on either the listed structure or the buried archaeology, and there is no information on how this impact will be addressed.

The area also lies within the Lower Wye Valley Historic Landscape, within Character Area HLCA011 Monmouth, characterised as: *Historic settlement core: Medieval/post-medieval settlement and associated Anglo-Norman castle; settlement pattern nucleated regular and organic (i.e. linear and irregular cluster); Post-medieval urban domestic, commercial, and civic buildings (medieval structures?);*

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*Anglo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval defensive features; relict and buried archaeology (multi period); communication features; Medieval and Post-medieval ecclesiastical features (churches, cemeteries and chapels); Industrial archaeology (eg. mill; brewery, site of tannery); historic associations.*

It is our opinion that it can therefore be expected that archaeological features are located here, which will be impacted upon by the proposed development, and as such any groundwork will have a significant impact on the archaeological resource.

There is the possibility that the proposed development has the potential to reveal and affect significant archaeological remains. Planning Policy Wales (Fourth Edition, February 2011) Section 6.5.1 notes that “*The desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining a planning application whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled.*”

The more detailed advice in Welsh Office Circular 60/96, Section 13, recommends that “*where research indicates that important archaeological remains may exist, the planning authority should request the prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken.*”

It is therefore our opinion in our role as the professionally retained archaeological advisors to your Members that the applicant should be requested to commission such an archaeological work.

**The determination of the planning application therefore should be deferred until a report on the archaeological evaluation has been submitted to your Members.** We recommend that this work be undertaken to a brief approved by yourselves and upon request, we can provide a suitable document for your approval.

If you have any questions or require further advice on this matter please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light grey rectangular box.

Judith Doyle  
Archaeological Planning Officer