West Yorkshire
Archaeology Advisory Service

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26/05/2026

2025/93355- Land off, Woodward Court, Mirfield, WF14 0PY
Erection of 75 residential dwellings with associated landscaping, open space, highways and drainage infrastructure
WYAAS Ref: CWY673

Dear Katie,

Thank you for the email of the 20th of May 2026, consulting WYAAS on the above application.

WYAAS has reviewed the submitted planning documentation, including the recent Specification for the investigation and treatment of shallow workings & mine entries prepared by Lithos (March 2026), and compared this with previous WYAAS advice and archaeological fieldwork reports.

WYAAS must formally advise that the site contains non-designated heritage assets of high regional significance that require a comprehensive programme of open-area archaeological excavation prior to any development or ground consolidation works.

The high archaeological sensitivity has been established via the trial trenching evaluation carried out by ASWYAS (Report No. 3149), WYAAS issued formal advice in 2018 confirming that the site holds unique evidential value showing human activity from the Bronze Age onwards. The key features identified, which remain an outstanding mitigation requirement, include:

Bronze Age Cremation Burials, with at least one definite Bronze Age cremation burial and several other possible similar burials. While historically degraded by agricultural ploughing, this concentration is of considerable significance for the Mirfield area.

A series of backfilled ditches defining an earlier field system was identified across the central part of the site. As WYAAS previously advised, there is a distinct paucity of recorded late Prehistoric and Romano-British field systems within Kirklees. Achieving accurate dating and spatial mapping of these features remains an important regional research priority.

The evaluation revealed a dispersed pattern of early mining across the site that predates the Parliamentary Enclosure Act of 1806. This pattern provides rare physical evidence of small-scale mineral extraction (potentially supporting local iron smelting) that followed the early enclosure of medieval open field systems in Mirfield.

WYAAS is aware that parts of the application site underwent topsoil stripping around 2019. It is critical to note that this initial stripping does not mean the archaeological resource has been lost. While the topsoil has been removed in specific areas, the sub-surface archaeological cuts—such as the fragile Bronze Age cremation pits, prehistoric postholes, and medieval ditch fills—remain intact, sealed in place within the underlying geological levels. These features remain highly vulnerable to any subsequent ground disturbance.

The *Lithos Ground Engineering Specification (March 2026)* outlines a comprehensive programme to investigate and stabilise the underlying Blocking Coal seam workings, which includes treating 12 identified mine entries and a potential bell pit group (MF004) in the southwest of the site. The proposed methods involve heavy tracked drilling rigs, extensive gridded borehole arrays, and pressure-grouting into shallow cavities.

WYAAS must strongly highlight that these ground treatment works have the potential to completely damage and obliterate the surviving archaeology. The vibration from drilling rigs, the physical insertion of close-spaced boreholes, and the lateral spread of pressurised grout will distort, fragment, or permanently seal the unexcavated prehistoric cremation burials and medieval horizons. Furthermore, because the dispersed early mining features themselves hold historical interest as part of Mirfield's industrial evolution, they must be archaeologically recorded before they are altered by modern engineering.

Recommended Course of Action

In line with previous WYAAS advice, a comprehensive programme of archaeological works (a Strip, Map, and Record open-area excavation) is necessary to target and clear the areas of high potential.

Should the local authority grant the planning application then to prevent the irreversible destruction of significant heritage assets and unexcavated human remains, the project timetable must be strictly controlled. All archaeological mitigation must be fully undertaken on-site and signed off by WYAAS before any ground treatment, engineering consolidation, or drilling works commence within the defined mitigation areas.

Recommended Planning Condition

WYAAS recommends that should planning consent be granted for the development, this work be secured by the attachment of a suitable condition to the permission. In accordance with the

Department of the Environment's Circular 11/95, we recommend that the condition be worded as follows:

The following condition is suggested by Historic England in their *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice, Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (2015), paragraph 37:

"No demolition/development shall take place/commence until a written scheme of archaeological investigation (WSI) has been [submitted to and] approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives, and:

- The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works;
- The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI."

Detail of Archaeological Investigation

Details of the necessary archaeological work, in the form of a specification, will be provided to the developer on written request, by the WY Archaeology Advisory Service in our capacity as the Kirklees Planning Department's advisors on archaeological matters. The WY Archaeology Advisory Service will also be responsible for monitoring the work of the archaeological contractor commissioned by the developer to undertake this work, on behalf of the Planning Authority.

In order to aid the developer to meet the requirements of the above condition I would suggest that it might be helpful to add the following as a note to the planning permission:

"For further information please contact: David Williams, West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service: 0113 535 3257"

We would strongly suggest that the developer be advised that a reasonable period of time for the execution of the necessary archaeological work must be allowed for within the overall site timetable. Any commencement of work on site prior to the approval and implementation of an

archaeological specification, and/or any failure to schedule work properly that results in inadequate archaeological recording, should be deemed by the Planning Department to be a breach of the planning condition.

Sincerely,
David Williams
WYAAS Team Manager