

**An open letter to:**

Rt Hon. Eric Pickles MP (Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government)

Rt Hon. Sajid Javid MP (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport)

**On house building by 'Old Oswestry'**

"one of the greatest archaeological monuments of the nation" – English Heritage

"the outstanding work of Early Iron Age type" – Professor Sir Cyril Fox (1934)

Dear Sirs,

We write to express on-going concerns within the heritage community over Shropshire County Council's proposal for housing development OSW004, a site for 117 houses, less than 300 m from the scheduled ancient monument, Old Oswestry Hillfort.

We understand that an 8,000 signature petition exists in opposition to the development, as held by the local Hands off Old Oswestry Hillfort campaign, and that concerns have been raised by the Society of Antiquaries of London, The Prehistoric Society, RESCUE (British Archaeological Trust), Campaign to Protect Rural England, and Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

As Senior Academics in British Archaeology, we would like to give our perspective.

In our view: 1) Old Oswestry hillfort is one of the greatest Iron Age hill forts in Britain; 2) OSW004 would claim an important area of the hillfort's hinterland; 3) this would cause irreparable harm to the hillfort's setting; 4) this is contrary to planning legislation established to protect the historic environment; and 5) this would set an unacceptable precedent.

Old Oswestry is a Scheduled Ancient Monument statutorily protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979). Development within the hinterland of this extraordinarily significant hillfort runs counter to the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), English Heritage's *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2011) and *Good Practice Advice on Setting and Decision-taking* (2014) and ultimately, the Valletta Convention (1992).

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records for all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for financial transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, it is noted that the records should be maintained in a secure and accessible format. This ensures that the information is readily available for review and audit purposes.

In addition, the document highlights the need for regular updates and reviews of the records. This practice helps to identify any discrepancies or errors early on, allowing for prompt correction.

It is also stressed that all personnel involved in the process should be trained and aware of the importance of accurate record-keeping. This ensures consistency and reliability in the data collected.

The document concludes by stating that maintaining accurate records is not only a legal requirement but also a best practice for any organization. It provides a solid foundation for decision-making and strategic planning.

Finally, it is recommended that organizations should consider investing in reliable record-keeping systems and software to streamline the process and reduce the risk of human error.

The NPPF (paragraphs 126-141) is explicit in its steer that the setting of heritage assets should be afforded protection proportionate to their significance. Yet, despite Old Oswestry's demonstrable importance, and despite concerns previously raised by those within the heritage sector, alongside very significant local opposition, OSW004 somehow remains in Shropshire's Site Allocations and Management of Development plan.

If the bar for acceptable development under the NPPF does not protect the setting of even our most significant heritage sites, then we set a potentially calamitous precedent for the greater part of the nation's historic environment.

Yours Sincerely,

**Professor Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn FBA, FSA**  
Emeritus Disney Professor of Archaeology, University of Cambridge

**Professor Sir Barrington Windsor Cunliffe CBE, FBA, FSA**  
Emeritus Professor of European Archaeology, University of Oxford

**Professor Ian Ralston OBE, FRSE, FSA, MCIFA**  
Abercromby Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology, University of Edinburgh

**Dr Geoffrey Wainwright MBE, FSA, FSLW**  
Hon. Vice President Society of Antiquaries

**Professor Richard Bradley FBA, FSA**  
Emeritus Professor of Archaeology, University of Reading

**Professor Dennis Harding FRSE**  
Emeritus Abercromby Professor of Archaeology, University of Edinburgh

**Professor Colin Haselgrove FBA, FSA**  
Professor of Archaeology, University of Leicester

**Professor Niall Sharples FSA**  
Professor of Archaeology, University of Cardiff

**Professor Ian Armit FSA**  
Professor of Archaeology, University of Bradford

**Dr John Creighton FSA**  
Director, Society of Antiquaries

**Dr Alexander Gibson FSA MCIfA**  
President, the Prehistoric Society

**Dr Alison Sheridan FSA, ACIfA**  
Emerita President, the Prehistoric Society

The first part of the report discusses the general situation of the country and the position of the various groups. It is found that the situation is generally satisfactory, but there are some points which require attention. The report also mentions that the various groups are generally satisfied with the work of the government, but there are some points which require attention.

The second part of the report discusses the work of the various departments. It is found that the work of the various departments is generally satisfactory, but there are some points which require attention. The report also mentions that the various departments are generally satisfied with the work of the government, but there are some points which require attention.

Conclusion

The report concludes that the situation in the country is generally satisfactory, but there are some points which require attention. It is recommended that the government should take steps to improve the situation in these points.

The report also mentions that the various groups are generally satisfied with the work of the government, but there are some points which require attention. It is recommended that the government should take steps to improve the situation in these points.

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