

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

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24th April 2023

Planning CONSULTATION RESPONSE – Application 230791 31 Barkham Ride Wokingham RG40 4EX

Thank you for consulting Berkshire Archaeology regarding the above application. Berkshire Archaeology is part of Reading Borough Council's Museum and Town Hall Services and provides historic environment advice to the five unitary authorities of Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council. This response relates solely to buried archaeological heritage, the Council's Conservation Officer should be consulted for any matters relating to the historic built environment.

There are potential archaeological implications with this proposed development as demonstrated by Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record. The site has archaeological potential for remains from all periods, particularly the Iron Age, the Early Medieval, and Medieval periods. The key indicators of archaeological potential come from the results of a watching brief on the creation of the car park for the country park just to the west of the site, where remains of possible Iron Age - Roman settlement and a possible Early Medieval earthwork were discovered. The excavators of those features suggested these may have been of some significance, and so it will need testing whether these features, or related remains, extend into the present site.

Given the potential significance of these remains, I would recommend that the condition specifies that the archaeological evaluation should be conducted prior to the determination of Reserved Matters applications dealing with layout. I would recommend that the applicant undertakes this work in good time prior to the detailed work-up of layout design, so that the archaeological results can inform the layout, maintaining preservation in situ as a viable mitigation approach if remains are encountered whose significance, or expense to excavate, justifies their preservation. This will reduce the risk to the applicant of significant archaeology being found at a late stage and necessitating re-designs, delays, and increased costs.

As shown, the application site falls within an area of archaeological significance and archaeological remains may be damaged by ground disturbance for the proposed development. It is therefore recommended that the following condition is applied, should permission be granted, in order to mitigate the impacts of development. This is in accordance with Paragraph 205 of the NPPF(2021) which states that local planning authorities should '*require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible*'.

Condition:

A) No development shall take place/commence until a programme of archaeological work including a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority in writing

The WSI shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
2. The programme for post investigation assessment
3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the WSI.

B) The Development shall take place in accordance with the WSI approved under condition (A), prior to the determination of any reserved matters applications dealing with layout.

The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason:

The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, particularly for, but not limited to, Prehistoric and Medieval remains. The potential impacts of the development can be mitigated through a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with national and local plan policy.

In view of the nature and scale of the development an archaeological Scheme of Works, prior to Reserved Matters, to include trial trench evaluation would represent an appropriate initial phase of investigation in order to determine the archaeological potential, levels of previous truncation, and the need for any further phases of work or for preservation in situ.

Berkshire Archaeology would be pleased to discuss the approach with the applicant, or their archaeological consultant, should permission be granted.

Linden Ellicott
Archaeology Officer