

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

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23rd July 2025

Planning CONSULTATION RESPONSE – Application 251413 Robin Lodge Nursery Part Lane Swallowfield Wokingham RG7 1TB

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. As per previous advice for similar proposals (222047/231233) this application relates to a site with high archaeological potential: a likely Iron Age settlement has been identified by crop marks on the opposite side of Part Lane, less than 100m from the site. It is unknown whether the site continues to the north and west into the application site as they have not, to date, had any investigation, therefore their full nature and extent is unknown. The cropmarks are in an area designated as an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) by policy TB25 of the Wokingham "Managing Development Delivery Local Plan," and thus the application site borders this AHAP.

Although the proposals here are modest: the new buildings are to be constructed within the footprints of those to be demolished, with the addition of a new attenuation pond, and other works of limited in scale, nevertheless, given the high archaeological potential, 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 218 of the NPPF(2025) 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).

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 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 and the low likelihood of the potential archaeology, should it exist, meriting preservation in situ, a small-scale archaeological Scheme of Works prior to the commencement of development is recommended as an appropriate initial phase of investigation. This is in order to determine the archaeological potential, levels of previous truncation, and the need for any further phases of work and could include a combination of a limited evaluation and/or a watching brief during any groundworks on site to permit the investigation and recording of any features being impacted.

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

Linden Ellicott
Archaeology Officer