8 Archaeology

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This chapter of the ES has been prepared by Richard Smalley BA (Hons) FSA, MCIFA, AssocIHBC, Senior Director at RPS Consulting Ltd (a Tetratech Company) and presents an assessment of the likely effects of the Proposed Development with respect to archaeology.

8.1.2 The chapter details the methodology followed, a review of the baseline conditions in the defined study area, and the results of the assessment.

8.1.3 This chapter is supported by the following figures and appendices:

- Figure 8.1 – Map of Archaeological Receptors
- Appendix 8.1 – Cultural Heritage Statement
- Appendix 8.2 – Geophysical Survey Report

8.1.4 A description of the Proposed Development can be found in Chapter 3 (Description of Development, Design and Mitigation).

8.2 Assessment methodology

8.2.1 Assessment of likely significant environmental effects on cultural heritage resources within the Site has been conducted in line with the latest and most comprehensive guidance provided in the “Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK” published by IEMA in July 2021.

8.2.2 The assessment methodology has also been guided by Historic England’s Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets.

Predicting effects

8.2.3 A study area extending 1km from the Site has been applied. This is considered appropriate given the scale of the Proposed Development and the character of the surrounding landscape, being sufficient to gather background data to inform the assessment of archaeological potential and to identify assets where there is potential for significance effects to occur as a result of change to their setting. In respect of the latter, the study area has been applied with a degree of flexibility and professional judgement.

Data Sources

The following data sources have been drawn upon:

- Historic England National Heritage List for England (NHLE);
- Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER);
- Historic mapping;
- Environment Agency LiDAR data;
- Satellite imagery;
- Site visits (May 2025);

- Geophysical survey;
- Multispectral survey.

Significance Criteria

8.2.4 The sensitivity of heritage receptors reflects their relative importance which will depend on factors such as condition, rarity, potential as a data source, associations with events or people, architectural or historic interest. Importance and hence sensitivity has been defined here with reference to designation, where applicable, and professional judgement, taking into account factors such as rarity, condition and historic and/or archaeological interest. Table 8.1 sets out the guidance criteria for assessing sensitivity.

8.2.5 The assessment methodology stages, can be outlined as follows:

Table 8.1 Value/sensitivity assessment

Receptor value / sensitivity	Receptor type
High	Heritage assets of national importance, e.g., Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields and non-designated archaeological assets demonstrably of schedulable quality.
Medium	Heritage assets of regional importance archaeological sites with potential to meaningfully contribute to regional research objectives.
Low	Heritage assets of local importance, e.g. archaeological assets of value in the local context.
Negligible	Heritage assets of very low significance.

8.2.6 Magnitude of impact has been considered in terms of change in the cultural significance (as defined in NPPF) of the heritage receptor. Such change may be beneficial or adverse. Beneficial effects may occur where, for example, a proposal arrests on-going loss of physical fabric, thereby preventing the loss of cultural significance, or removes elements of the receptor's setting that hinder the appreciation of its cultural significance. Adverse effects may occur where a proposal results in the loss of physical fabric and hence cultural significance or introduces features to the receptor's setting that detract from the appreciation of its cultural significance. As different elements of a heritage asset or its setting will make differing contributions to its cultural significance, the level of contribution and whether this is positive or negative, or neutral, is taken into account when determining magnitude. For this reason, a relatively small change in a receptor's fabric might result in a high magnitude of effect, whilst a large change in its setting might result in a low magnitude of effect, or vice versa. Furthermore, as elements of an asset's setting may make a neutral contribution to its cultural significance, it is possible for even relatively large changes in setting to have no impact upon its cultural significance, resulting in a neutral change. Guidance criteria for assessment of magnitude are provided in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 Magnitude of impact

Magnitude	Description
High	Beneficial: Proposal would provide for the long-term conservation/survival of the heritage receptor where this is otherwise threatened or would remove elements of its setting that substantively detract from the receptor's cultural significance or prevent its appreciation. Adverse: Proposal would result in total or substantial destruction of the heritage receptor or change in its setting resulting in the complete or near complete loss of its cultural significance or the ability to appreciate it.
Medium	Beneficial: Proposals would reduce rate of current degradation thereby preserving the receptor's cultural significance or remove elements of its fabric or setting that detract from its cultural significance or the ability to appreciate it. Adverse: Proposal would result in change in setting or loss of fabric resulting in partial loss of the receptor's cultural significance.
Low	Beneficial: Proposal would result in changes in the receptor's fabric or setting that slightly increase its cultural significance. Adverse: Proposal would result in change in setting or loss of fabric leading to very slight loss of the receptor's cultural significance.
Negligible	Change to a heritage receptor or its setting that does not affect their cultural significance.

8.2.7 Level of effect is determined through professional judgement with reference to the sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of impact. Table 8.3 provides guidelines to assist in the consistent application of professional judgement. Effects of moderate or greater significance are classified as significant effects for the purposes of this assessment; these may be adverse of beneficial.

Table 8.3 Level of effect

Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Impact			
	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Major Adverse or Beneficial	Moderate Adverse or Beneficial	Minor Adverse or Beneficial	Negligible
Medium	Moderate Adverse or Beneficial	Moderate to Minor Adverse or Beneficial	Minor Adverse or Beneficial to Negligible	Negligible
Low	Minor Adverse or Beneficial	Minor Adverse or Beneficial to Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

8.2.8 An effect considered to be Moderate or above (shaded in table 8.3) is deemed to be significant in the context of the 2017 EIA Regulations.

Geographic Scope

8.2.9 The geographic scope for this assessment includes the Site and area 1km from its boundary. This is deemed sufficient to assess potential impacts of the Proposed Development on nearby archaeological receptors.

Temporal Scope

8.2.10 No defined temporal scope is used in the assessment. The assessment has assumed that effects will be present for the duration of the receptors' physical presence in the landscape and the length of the Proposed Development's construction and occupation.

Consultation

8.2.11 Consultation has been undertaken with Linden Ellicott, Archaeology Officer at Berkshire County Council.

8.2.12 Consultation is summarised in Table 8.4, below.

Table 8.4 Consultation

Consultee	Date/Time	Comments	Outcomes/Actions
Wokingham Borough Council	December 2024.	Scoping Opinion Request to agree scope prior to the commencement of assessment.	
Linden Ellicott, Berkshire Archaeology	16th May 2025. 16:01.	Sent Written Scheme of Investigation for geophysical survey of the Site with proposed start date.	Acknowledged 21st May 2025. 16:27.

Assumptions and Limitations

8.2.13 Due to the presence of crop on the Site, no geophysical survey or trial trenching has been undertaken (see Appendix 8.2). It is anticipated that archaeological evaluation will take place during the application's determination period and within an inter-cropping window.

8.2.14 As such, the assessment of the significance of the archaeological receptors is based on professional judgement and experience.

8.3 Baseline conditions

Current Baseline

8.3.1 The baseline is informed by the production of a Cultural Heritage Statement (May 2025 – Appendix 8.1) including Historic Environment Data, research, historic mapping and a site visit, as well as the findings of a geophysical survey undertaken in August 2025 (Appendix 8.2). The desk-based assessment covered the Site and an area of up to 1km from its boundary, the geophysical survey was focussed on the Site only.

8.3.2 Archaeological receptors, labelled **AR#**, are shown on Figure 8.1 "Map of Archaeological Receptors".

8.3.3 **AR1** is the location of the discovery of a Roman coin hoard, as recorded by the HER within Appendix 8.1, of thirty-five denarii dating to between the late Republican to late 2nd century AD. **AR1** is located centrally within the Site as shown on Figure 8.1. Whilst the coin hoard itself has been removed from the Site, there is potential here for further Roman finds or features. **AR1** is considered to be a Low sensitivity receptor.

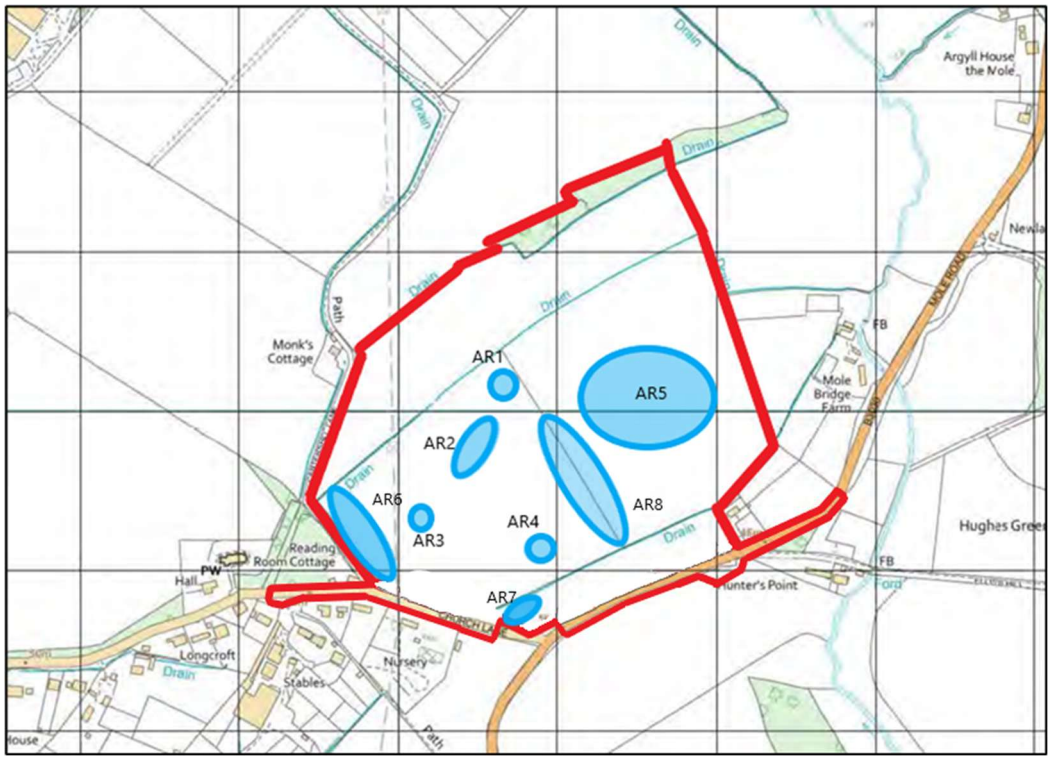
8.3.4 **AR2 and AR4** are the locations of the discovery of a number of Prehistoric flint artefacts as identified by the HER in Appendix 8.1. **AR2** and **AR4** are located within the Site as shown in Figure 8.1. The flints have been removed from Site; however, there is potential for the presence of further Prehistoric finds or features in these locations. **AR2 and AR4** are considered to be a Low sensitivity receptor.

8.3.5 **AR3** is the location of the discovery of a fragment of Roman pottery in the western part of the Site (see Figure 8.1) and is recorded by the HER, included in Appendix 8.1. The pottery sherd has been removed from the Site. However, there is potential for further Roman period finds or features in this location. **AR3** is considered to be a Low sensitivity receptor.

8.3.6 **AR5** is evidence of former ridge and furrow cultivation in the eastern part of the Site as per the HER data included in Appendix 8.1. **AR5** is of Negligible sensitivity.

8.3.7 **AR6, AR7 and AR8** comprises three areas of anomalies identified in the geophysical survey (Appendix 8.2). These receptors are discrete anomalies or trenches of increased magnetic response. They could be related to archaeological activity but could equally be of a natural origin. At this stage, **AR6-AR8** are considered to be Low Sensitivity and are shown in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1 Map of Archaeological Receptors



Future Baseline

8.3.8 In terms of future baseline, it is considered that without the implementation of the Proposed Development, the Site would remain in use as agricultural land.

8.3.9 The likely evolution of the current archaeological environment would include the unrecorded truncation and removal of archaeological receptors **AR1-AR8** through continued agricultural purposes.

8.4 Inherent design mitigation

8.4.1 There is no inherent design mitigation relevant to archaeology.

8.5 Potential effects prior to additional mitigation

Construction Phase

8.5.1 Sources of potential impacts on archaeological resources during the demolition and construction phrases are:

- Soil stripping and terracing;
- Cutting of new roads, foundations and associated services;
- Changes to surface or groundwater flows;
- General hard and soft landscaping of the Site; and
- Indirect setting impacts (such as noise, dust).

8.5.2 Archaeological Receptors **AR1**, **AR2**, **AR3**, **AR4**, **AR5** and **AR8** are all located in parts of the Site that are proposed for residential development as shown in the Illustrative Masterplan. The groundworks relating to the development in this part of the Site will have a physical, permanent

impact on these receptors. This is a High Adverse magnitude of impact in accordance with Table 8.2.

8.5.3 Archaeological Receptors **AR6** and **AR7** are located in areas of the Site that are proposed for tree planting. The planting of trees and the growth of tree roots could result in partial loss of archaeological receptors. In accordance with Table 8.2, this would be a Medium Adverse magnitude of impact.

8.5.4 **AR1, AR2, AR3, AR4, AR5** and **AR8** are receptors of Low Sensitivity. In accordance with Table 8.3, the High Adverse magnitude of impact on these Low Sensitivity receptors will result in a **Minor Adverse** level of effect.

8.5.5 **AR6** and **AR7** are Low Sensitivity receptors that will be subject to a Medium Adverse magnitude of impact through tree planting. In accordance with Table 8.3, this would result in a **Minor Adverse to Negligible** level of effect.

8.5.6 **AR5** is an archaeological receptor of Negligible Sensitivity. In accordance with Table 8.3, the High Adverse magnitude of impact on this receptor will result in a **Negligible** level of effect

Operational Phase

8.5.7 Archaeological receptors **AR1 – AR8** will all have been removed during the Construction Phase. Therefore, the potential Operation Phase effects are **Neutral**.

8.6 Additional Mitigation

Construction Phase

8.6.1 Archaeological evaluation is planned to take place during the determination period of the application and when the crop has been removed from the Site. Should the evaluation identify archaeological remains, it is anticipated that a programme of archaeological excavation, recording, analysis and reporting would be agreed with the Planning Authority's Archaeological Advisor.

Operational Phase

8.6.2 No additional mitigation is required. Any archaeological fieldwork on Site will have been completed during the Construction Phase; however, it is possible that post-excavation assessment, analysis, reporting and publication may be ongoing during the Operational Phase.

8.7 Residual effects

Construction Phase

8.7.1 The programme of archaeological works will offset the physical loss of archaeological receptors **AR1**-**AR8**. In respect of any archaeological remains, the works will almost completely offset their physical loss by realising their archaeological potential. However, it is acknowledged that there is likely to remain some loss of data that might be recovered by future archaeological methods. It is therefore considered that following the implementation of the mitigation measures there will remain an adverse impact of small magnitude. This is considered to represent an effect of **Negligible** significance. This is not significant in the terms of the EIA Regulations.

Operational Phase

8.7.2 Archaeological receptors **AR1 – AR8** will all have been removed during the Construction Phase. Therefore, the potential residual Operation Phase effects are **Neutral**.

8.8 Implications of Climate Change

8.8.1 Any archaeological remains on Site will have been sufficiently excavated and recorded prior to their removal through the Proposed Development. Once the archaeological remains have been removed and recorded, they will not be affected by climate change.

8.9 Cumulative effects

Loddon Valley Garden Village Strategic Development Location

8.9.1 Assessment for the above scheme did not identify any residual significant archaeological effects.

8.9.2 There are not considered to be any meaningful increases in magnitude through the Proposed Development that would result in significant archaeological effects.

Wider Committed Development

8.9.3 Cumulative schemes beyond 1km from the Site have not been considered due to the distance from it. The following sites will be assessed:

- Land North of Reading Road, Arborfield (243099). 111 units proposed 0.3km from the Site. The LPA Archaeology Officer recommended a conditioned approach to address the archaeological potential on this site.

8.9.4 The recording of archaeological remains from the above scheme, along with any archaeological mitigation carried out relating to the Proposed Development on the Site would result in an increase in knowledge of the local archaeological record. This would be a Minor Beneficial outcome.

8.9.5 The remaining cumulative sites are not considered relevant due to their distance from the Site.

8.9.6 No cumulative effects are anticipated.

8.10 Summary

8.10.1 Archaeological receptors **AR1**-**AR8** are considered likely to be of no more than local interest at best.

8.10.2 None of the effects are considered to be significant in terms of EIA Regulations.

8.10.3 A summary of the assessment is set out in Table 8.5 overleaf.

8.11 References

- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (updated 2023) *National Planning Policy Framework*
- Historic England (2017) Good Practice Advice in Planning 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets: 2nd edition
- IEMA (2021) Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK

8.12 Assessor information

Table 8.5 Assessor Information

Chapter	Responsibility	Name	Qualifications	Assessor information
Archaeology	RPS Consulting Services Ltd	Richard Smalley	BA (Hons), FSA, MCIfA, AssocIHBC	Richard Smalley is Senior Director for RPS Consulting. He has a degree in Archaeology from the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (BA Hons), is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCIfA), a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (FSA) and an Associate Member of the Institute for Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). Richard has over 20 years' experience working in the archaeology sector including fieldwork (geophysics, trial trenching, excavation), research, graphics, and consultancy. As a consultant Richard has provided archaeology and heritage advice and project management to clients for a variety of developments including residential, infrastructure, commercial and renewable energy. He has also acted as an expert witness in Public Inquiries.

Table 8.6 Summary of effects

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
Construction Phase					
AR1	Low	Physical loss of receptor through groundworks related to development	Programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication	Negligible	Not significant
AR2	Low	Physical loss of receptor through groundworks related to development	Programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication	Negligible	Not significant
AR3	Low	Physical loss of receptor through groundworks related to development	Programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication	Negligible	Not significant
AR4	Low	Physical loss of receptor through groundworks related to development	Programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication	Negligible	Not significant
AR5	Negligible	Physical loss of receptor through groundworks related to development	None	Negligible	Not significant
AR6	Low	Partial physical loss of receptor through tree planting	Programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication	Negligible	Not significant
AR7	Low	Partial physical loss of receptor through tree planting	Programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication	Negligible	Not significant
AR8	Low	Physical loss of receptor through groundworks related to development	Programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication	Negligible	Not significant

Receptor	Receptor sensitivity	Description of potential impact	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	Significant / not significant
Operation Phase					
AR1	Low	None	None	None	Not significant
AR2	Low	None	None	None	Not significant
AR3	Low	None	None	None	Not significant
AR4	Low	None	None	None	Not significant
AR5	Negligible	None	None	None	Not significant
AR6	Low	None	None	None	Not significant
AR7	Low	None	None	None	Not significant
AR8	Low	None	None	None	Not significant

8.13 Mitigation commitments Summary

Table 8.7 Summary for Securing Mitigation

Identified receptor	Type and purpose of additional mitigation measure (prevent, reduce, offset, enhance)	Means by which mitigation may be secured (e.g. planning condition / legal agreement)	Delivered by	Auditable by
Construction Phase				
AR1	Programme of archaeological mitigation to record archaeological features prior to their loss through development	Planning Condition	Developer	LPA
AR2	Programme of archaeological mitigation to record archaeological features prior to their loss through development	Planning Condition	Developer	LPA

Identified receptor	Type and purpose of additional mitigation measure (prevent, reduce, offset, enhance)	Means by which mitigation may be secured (e.g. planning condition / legal agreement)	Delivered by	Auditable by
AR3	Programme of archaeological mitigation to record archaeological features prior to their loss through development	Planning Condition	Developer	LPA
AR4	Programme of archaeological mitigation to record archaeological features prior to their loss through development	Planning Condition	Developer	LPA
AR5	None	None	None	None
AR6	Programme of archaeological mitigation to record archaeological features prior to their loss through development	Planning Condition	Developer	LPA
AR7	Programme of archaeological mitigation to record archaeological features prior to their loss through development	Planning Condition	Developer	LPA
AR8	Programme of archaeological mitigation to record archaeological features prior to their loss through development	Planning Condition	Developer	LPA
Operation Phase				
AR1	None	None	None	None
AR2	None	None	None	None
AR3	None	None	None	None
AR4	None	None	None	None
AR5	None	None	None	None
AR6	None	None	None	None
AR7	None	None	None	None
AR8	None	None	None	None