

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

Barkham Square: Land at Barkham Road, Barkham, Berkshire

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Barkham Road, Barkham,
Berkshire
Version 5
February 2026

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Barkham Square: Land at Barkham Road, Barkham has been assessed for its below ground archaeological potential.
- The study site comprises an area of agricultural land to the south/southeast of Barkham Road and is proposed for residential led development.
- In terms of relevant nationally significant designated heritage assets, no World Heritage Sites, Historic Wreck or Historic Battlefield study sites have been identified within the study site, or within the vicinity of the study site.
- The nearest Scheduled Monuments include a *Moated site north of the Moat House* (SM Ref. 1009886), located over 500m southwest of the study site and a *Moated site and associated enclosure at Church Farm* (SM Ref. 1013181), located c.600m to the east of the Site.
- The Scheduled *Moated site north of the Moat House* comprises below ground archaeological remains only. There is no intervisibility between the study site and the Scheduled Monument. The proposed development will have no impact on this designated heritage asset or its setting.
- The *Moated site and associated enclosure at Church Farm* comprises a moat ditch and below ground archaeological remains. There is no intervisibility between the Site the Scheduled Monument. Principally, this is due to the mature and extensive tree cover around the boundaries of the monument itself, the intervening distance and the intervening built development along Barkham Street. Overall, the proposed development will have no impact on this designated heritage asset or its setting.
- There are no locally designated archaeological sites on or particularly near the study site as designated by Wokingham Borough Council.
- Based on current evidence, this assessment has identified a high potential for further evidence of prehistoric burnt mounds of low significance, a moderate potential for the remains of Bronze Age occupation/activity of low/medium significance and a moderate potential for Iron Age and Roman field ditches and enclosures of low significance. A potential is also identified for Medieval and Post-Medieval field boundaries of low/negligible significance. A low archaeological potential is identified for all other periods.
- The removal and grubbing out of woodland in the central-eastern part of the Site in the late 20th century is likely to have had a severe archaeological impact and therefore the potential for archaeological survival is likely to be poor in this area. Elsewhere, historic agricultural activity has likely caused widespread disturbance to archaeological horizons. Much of this disturbance is likely to have been fairly shallow and therefore the possibility of archaeological survival in these areas is considered to be good.
- A geophysical survey of the Site, carried out in 2024 has not identified features of archaeological interest that are likely to be greater of low, local interest only and primarily relate to the historical cultivation of the Site (Appendix 2). The geophysical survey included areas of land that are not included within the application site boundary and are not discussed here.
- The proposed development has the potential to impact below ground archaeological remains of local/regional significance through landscaping and excavations for foundations, services and attenuation.
- In view of the size of the study site, and as the site has remained largely unaffected by previous development throughout its documented history, it is anticipated that the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority will require mitigation in advance of development.
- An archaeological trial trench evaluation will be required, focussed within the areas of proposed impact, with further works depending upon the results of evaluation. The scope and timing of such works should be discussed with the archaeological advisor in due course.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This below ground archaeological desk-based assessment has been researched by James Wisher and prepared by Edward Hawkins and Sally Dicks of RPS Consulting Services Ltd on behalf of the client, Crest Nicholson.
- 1.2 The subject of this Assessment comprises the site, also referred to as the study site, known as Barkham Square: land at Barkham Road, Barkham, Berkshire (Figure 1). The study site is roughly centred at NGR SU 77345 66413. The study site comprises agricultural land on the north-eastern edge of Arborfield Garrison.
- 1.3 In terms of relevant nationally designated heritage assets, as defined below in Section 2 and as shown on Figure 2a, no World Heritage sites, Historic Wreck or Historic Battlefield sites have been identified either within the study site itself, or within the vicinity of the study site. The nearest Scheduled Monuments are a *Moated site north of the Moat House* (SM Ref. 1009886) over 500m southwest of the study site and a *Moated site and associated enclosure at Church Farm* (SM Ref. 1013181), located over 600m to the east of the study site.
- 1.4 There are no locally designated archaeological sites on or particularly near the study site as designated by Wokingham Borough Council.
- 1.5 Crest Nicholson has commissioned RPS Consulting Services Ltd to establish the archaeological potential of the site and to provide guidance on ways to address any archaeological constraints identified.
- 1.6 In accordance with relevant policy and guidance on archaeology and planning, and in accordance with the 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments' (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists January 2020), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the archaeological potential of the site.
- 1.7 This desk-based assessment comprises an examination of evidence held on the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER), and other sources, particularly the results of previous archaeological work from within the vicinity of the study site. The report also includes the results of a comprehensive map regression exercise together with a review of relevant secondary historical sources. This report is also informed by a geophysical survey of the study site carried out in 2024 (Appendix 2).
- 1.8 This assessment thus enables relevant parties to assess the archaeological potential of the study site and to consider the need for design, civil engineering, and archaeological solutions to the archaeological potential identified.

2 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was most recently revised in December 2024. The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which was published online 6th March 2014 and has since been periodically updated.
- 2.2 The NPPF and NPPG are additionally supported by three Good Practice Advice (GPA) documents published by Historic England: GPA 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans; GPA 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (both published March 2015). The second edition of GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets was published in December 2017.

National Planning Policy

- 2.3 Section 16 of the NPPF, entitled 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:
- Delivery of sustainable development;
 - Understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;
 - Conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
 - Recognition that heritage makes a contribution towards our knowledge and understanding of the past.
- 2.4 Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. Paragraph 207 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset and that level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to review the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.
- 2.5 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- 2.6 Annex 2 also defines *Archaeological Interest* as a heritage asset which holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- 2.7 A *Nationally Important Designated Heritage Asset* comprises a: World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
- 2.8 *Significance* is defined as: The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.
- 2.9 *Setting of a heritage asset* is defined as: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
- 2.10 In short, government policy provides a framework which:

- Protects nationally important designated Heritage Assets;
- Protects the settings of such designations;
- In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from desk based assessment and field evaluation where necessary) to enable informed decisions;
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not significant enough to merit *in-situ* preservation.

- 2.11 The NPPG reiterates that the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. Furthermore, it highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Importantly, the guidance states that if complete, or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified, the aim should then be to capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance and make the interpretation publicly available. Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. An important consideration should be whether the proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset's special architectural or historic interest. Additionally, it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed. The level of 'substantial harm' is considered to be a high bar that may not arise in many cases. Essentially, whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF. Importantly, harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may be more extensive than the curtilage. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.
- 2.12 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

Local Planning Policy

Wokingham Borough

- 2.13 The Wokingham Borough Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 29th January 2010. It contains the following policy relating to archaeology and heritage:

CP3 - General Principles for development

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

...c) Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.

- 2.14 The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, adopted in February 2014, contains the following policy relating to archaeology and heritage:

Policy TB25: Archaeology

1. Areas of high archaeological potential are shown on the Policies Map.

2. In areas of high archaeological potential, applicants will need to provide a detailed assessment of the impact on archaeological remains.

3. Where development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area which is likely to contain archaeological remains, the presumption is that appropriate measures shall be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ. Where this is not practical, applicants shall provide for excavation, recording and archiving of the remains.

- 2.15 The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036 (Adopted April 2020) contains the following policy relating to the historic character of the area:

POLICY IRS4: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE AREA

1. Development proposals will need to demonstrate how they protect or enhance the historic and natural character of the area, specifically:

- a) Arborfield Cross Conservation Area
- b) Chamberlain's Farm Area of Special Character
- c) The Barkham Street Area of Special Character
- d) The local historic environment, including the setting of Listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments and other historically significant buildings

2. Locally valued heritage assets have been identified in the plan as follows and development proposals should protect and enhance them where possible:

- a) The historic chestnut avenue in Arborfield, linking The Old Rectory to the remains of the old church.
- b) The lime grove at Nashgrove Ride in Barkham.
- c) Carters Hill
- d) The granary in Barkham Street

Relevant National and Local Designations

- 2.16 In terms of designated heritage assets as defined above and as shown on Figure 2a, no nationally designated Historic Battlefield sites, Historic Wreck sites or Historic Parks and Gardens lie within the vicinity of the study site.
- 2.17 The nearest Scheduled Monuments include a *Moated site north of the Moat House* (SM Ref. 1009886), located over 500m southwest of the study site and a *Moated site and associated enclosure at Church Farm* (SM Ref. 1013181), located c.600m to the east of the Site.
- 2.18 There are no locally designated archaeological sites on or particularly near the study site as designated by Wokingham Borough Council.
- 2.19 In line with relevant planning policy and guidance, this desk based assessment seeks to clarify the study site's archaeological potential and the need or otherwise for additional mitigation measures.
- 2.20 The impact of development on built heritage assets is considered in a separate Built Heritage Assessment.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Geology

- 3.1 The bedrock geology of the majority of the study site is shown by the British Geological Survey (BGS Online 2022) as comprising London Clay Formation (Clay, Silt and Sand) with Bagshot Formation (Sand) present.
- 3.2 No superficial geological deposits are recorded on the study site by the BGS. However, Alluvial Deposits comprising, Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel may be present along the course of the stream passing through the study site on a southwest to northeast alignment.
- 3.3 No site specific or British Geological Survey borehole data is currently available for the study site.

Topography

- 3.4 The study site is located in rolling countryside at an elevation of between c.47m and c.58m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Within the study site from Barkham Road in the northwest, at c.53-54m AOD, and Commonfield Lane in the southeast, at c. 58-59m AOD, the study site falls towards its centre at between c.47-52m AOD, where a tributary of Barkham brook flows west towards a large pond at the midpoint of the south-western site boundary. The stream joins another small stream just outside the northeast boundary of the site which eventually joins the River Loddon.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND WITH ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Timescales used in this report

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	900,000 -	12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 -	4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 -	2,500 BC
Bronze Age (including Chalcolithic)	2,500 -	800 BC
Iron Age	800 -	AD 43

Historic

Roman	AD 43 -	410
Saxon/Early Medieval	AD 410 -	1066
Medieval	AD 1066 -	1485
Post-Medieval	AD 1486 -	1799
Modern	AD 1800 -	Present

Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter reviews the available archaeological evidence for the study site and the archaeological/historical background of the study site and surrounding area, and, in accordance with NPPF, considers the potential for any as yet to be discovered archaeological evidence on the study site prior to any assessment of any later development or below ground impacts.
- 4.2 What follows in this section of the report comprises a review of archaeological findspots within a 1km buffer around the study site (Figs. 2a-b), also referred to as the study area search radius, held on the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER), together with a historic map regression exercise charting the development of the study area from the eighteenth century onwards until the present day. The search area was chosen based upon extensive professional experience within this area of Berkshire as well as professional judgement.
- 4.3 This report is informed by a geophysical survey of the study site (Appendix 2). The geophysical surveying of the study site has recorded various features of archaeological origin relating to the historical cultivation of the study site. No features of greater than local significance are indicated to be present. The geophysical survey included areas of land that are not included within the application site boundary and are not discussed here.
- 4.4 As stated above, in terms of nationally significant designated heritage assets, as defined above in paragraph 2.16 above, and as shown on Figure 2a, no World Heritage sites, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck sites lie within, or within the vicinity of the study site.
- 4.5 The nearest Scheduled Monuments include a *Moated site north of the Moat House* (SM Ref. 1009886), located over 500m southwest of the study site and a *Moated site and associated enclosure at Church Farm* (SM Ref. 1013181), located c.600m to the east of the study site.
- 4.6 There are no locally designated archaeological sites on or particularly near the study site as designated by Wokingham Borough Council.

- 4.7 Chapter 5 subsequently considers the study site conditions as understood through this review of potential archaeological assets, and whether the theoretical potential identified is likely to survive the impact of previous and existing development.
- 4.8 The impact of development on built heritage assets is considered in a separate Built Heritage Assessment.

Previous Archaeological Investigations

- 4.9 There are 5 Event entries recorded on the Berkshire HER that are located within the study site (see Figure 2b). These comprise the following:
- **EWK205** - A watching brief undertaken for Arborfield/Barking Relief Sewer Scheme recorded a possible section of a prehistoric burnt mound within the study site (MWK7238).
 - **EWK28, EWK31 and EWK32** - Between 1990 and 1993 the Berkshire Field Research Group undertook systematic fieldwalking within the study site.
 - **ERM278** - During the 1980s a survey of East Berkshire's archaeology was undertaken with the aim to obtain a fuller picture of past human activity in the area. Fieldwalking and Aerial Photographic interpretation was undertaken for the field to the south of the stream. No finds were retrieved during the fieldwalking (the entry shown on Figure 2a, MWK8592, is erroneous and refers to an Iron Age coin found in a back garden).
- 4.10 There have been a large number of archaeological investigations undertaken within the vicinity of the study site particularly in relation to the redevelopment of Arborfield Garrison. Previous archaeological works undertaken on the Garrison site between 2000 and 2016 are summarised below (in date order) and illustrated on Figure 2b.
- **EWK101, EWK115, EWK147 and EWK203** - A programme of evaluation at Baird Road (Phase 1), comprising 120 trenches, recorded two small ditches dated to the Early/Middle Iron Age and two small undated ditches or gullies (EWK101). A second phase of trenching, comprising 17 trenches, recorded disturbance from the previous barracks development and no archaeological features (EWK115). The Phase 3 evaluation trenching, comprising 15 trenches, recorded a single gully close to where features had been revealed in Phase 1 (EWK147). A follow up excavation comprised two areas (Areas A and B: EWK203) contained features typical of an Early/Middle Iron Age farmstead. A large quantity of metalworking debris indicated iron smelting on or near the site.
 - **ERM1476** - A magnetic susceptibility survey of over 90ha of land at Arborfield Garrison highlighted large areas of magnetic variation in the fields within the southern part of the survey area.
 - **ERM1477** - Further detailed magnetometry on an area 8.82ha in extent identified significant disturbance as a result of previous garrison development, however a potential for archaeology to survive within the south of the site was identified. Further detailed survey was undertaken of the site where weak signals suggested the presence of archaeology.
 - **ERM1759** - A detailed geophysical survey of c.40ha at Arborfield Garrison identified a few anomalies of minor archaeological interest including Post-Medieval field boundaries and a probable pond or small claypit.
 - **ERM1837** - A programme of evaluation trenching on Parcel AA, comprising 8 trenches, recorded no archaeological features or finds.
 - **ERM1872 and ERM1885** - Fifty-five trenches were excavated on Parcel T, four contained Post-Medieval features and two contained undated features; one of which appeared to be a section

of ring ditch. Follow up excavation recorded a limited number of features associated with the Iron Age ring ditch observed in evaluation as well as some later features.

- **ERM1876** - Twenty-six trenches were excavated on Parcels F & G, of these 6 contained archaeological features in the form of undated ditches, possibly representing field systems.
- **ERM1877** - Nine trenches were undertaken on Parcel C2 of these 6 contained modern intrusions and the other 3 contained no archaeological finds or features.
- **ERM1882** - Thirty-five trenches were excavated on Parcels R 1 and R2 of these 23 contained evidence of modern intrusion and the rest contained no archaeological finds or features.
- **ERM1884** - Six trenches were excavated on Parcel X. A small number of features were recorded including undated ditches and a post-hole.
- **ERM1887** - Twenty-eight trenches were excavated on Parcel SC1, of these, 17 produced no archaeological finds or features and the other 11 trenches contained evidence of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age occupation/activity.
- **ERM1889** - Ten trial trenches were excavated on Parcel O1, of these, 8 trenches contained cut features of mostly undated or attributed to the late Post-Medieval period.
- **ERM1892** - Fifty-nine trenches were excavated on Parcels S1 and S2, of these, 37 contained no archaeology and the rest contained undated and Post-Medieval features.
- **ERM1926** - Eleven trenches were excavated on Parcel U1 and U2 none of which contained archaeological features or finds.
- **ERM1930** - Sixteen trenches were excavated on Parcel V1, of these, 3 trenches contained evidence of Roman activity in the form of ditches, and gullies.
- **ERM1931** - Forty trenches were excavated on Parcel V2, of these, six trenches contained undated or Late Bronze age/Early Iron Age features.
- **ERM1932** - Nine trenches were excavated on Parcel Y, of these, only a single post-hole containing two sherds of Bronze Age pottery was recorded.

4.11 Other investigations undertaken within the study area comprise the following:

- **EWK25, 26 27, 28, 29 and 30** – Between 1990 and 1993 the Berkshire Field Research Group undertook systematic fieldwalking within the study area.
- **ERM1700 and ERM1164** - A geophysical survey was undertaken on land at Rooks Nest Farm c.450m southeast of the study site. This was followed by an archaeological evaluation and watching brief was undertaken during the construction of Barkham Ride. The investigations revealed a multi-phased site comprising possible Bronze Age/Early Iron Age field systems, Iron Age/Roman settlement, Medieval furrows and Post-Medieval drainage ditches. It is understood that the site was preserved in situ underneath the car park.
- **EWK82** - A programme of evaluation trenching at Whitehall Brick and Tile Works c. 1.1km southwest of the study site, comprising 26 trenches, recorded evidence of Roman occupation in the form of gullies, ditches, pits, post-holes and a working hollow. A follow up excavation recorded several phases of occupation dating from the Mid/Late Iron Age to the 2nd century AD. The site produced 8330 sherds of pottery and 53kg of metalworking debris typical of iron smelting.
- **EWK108 and ERM1229** - A small programme of evaluation trenching at No.14 Sheerlands Road c.1.1km southwest of the study site, comprising 5 trenches, revealed two intercutting gullies of Iron Age/Roman date. A follow up watching brief recorded a single undated gully.

- **ERM1891** - A programme of evaluation trenching was undertaken on land adjacent to Arborfield Secondary School c.1.1km southwest of the study site. Three trenches were excavated one of which contained two undated ditches.
- **EWK34** - A watching brief on a pipeline between Barkham Church and the scheduled moated site, c.20m east of the study site, recorded no archaeological remains.
- **ERM738** - A watching brief was undertaken during the removal and replacement of pipework as part of the Barkham Flood Alleviation Scheme, between 200m and c.600m north-west of the study site, however no finds or features were recorded during the monitoring.
- **ERM1339** - A watching brief and evaluation trenching undertaken at The Well House, Barkham Street, c.350m north of the study site, recorded a pit containing a sherd of pottery potentially dating to the Iron Age along with evidence relating to agricultural activity and a general spread of Medieval pottery in the topsoil.
- **ERM582** - Between 1979 and 1983 a survey was undertaken of the hedgerows and boundaries of most of the farms in the Finchampstead area. The results found that many hedges shown on the 1974 Ordnance Survey map have either been removed or replaced with fences.

Palaeolithic & Mesolithic

- 4.12 The Palaeolithic period represents the period of human activity leading up to the end of the last Ice Age c 11,000 years ago, and the emergence of anatomically modern humans. Little is known about the lifestyles and activities of these people, as the bulk of survivable evidence comes from stone tools that have been recovered, often relocated from their primary location of deposition by erosion and water movement, and from rare skeletal fragments and faunal remains.
- 4.13 No evidence for human activity or artefacts of Palaeolithic date are recorded within the study area.
- 4.14 Despite a programme of extensive fieldwalking surveys along the Loddon Valley and across Barkham (Figure 2b), no flint flakes and cores have been collected. In the area of the site, northwest of the central stream, two fieldwalking exercises were undertaken in 1993 as part of the Barkham Survey (Figure 2b, EWK31 and EWK32). The small parcel of land to the northeast of Barkham Street was fieldwalked as part of the Barkham Survey in 1990 (EWK28).
- 4.15 The area of the study site to the southeast of the stream was fieldwalked and subject to aerial photograph interpretation as part of the East Berkshire Archaeological Survey between 1984 and 1986. No finds were retrieved and no crop marks were identified within this part of the study site (the entry shown on Figure 2a, MWK8592, is erroneous and refers to an Iron Age coin found in a back garden).
- 4.16 The HER records the discovery of two Mesolithic flakes on a building site at the rear of 5 Link Way, Arborfield (MWK8594).
- 4.17 The presence of early prehistoric material is notoriously difficult to predict. In view of the paucity of evidence to date within the study site and the study area, the underlying geological sequence, the potential for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic at the study site is considered to be low/nil. At this time site and the surrounding area would have comprised dense woodland which still survived into the Medieval period as the Great Windsor Forest, such an environment would not have been conducive to early settlement.

Neolithic and Bronze Age

- 4.18 From around 4000 BC the mobile hunter-gathering economy of the Mesolithic gradually gave way to a more settled agriculture-based subsistence. The pace of woodland clearance to create arable and pasture-based agricultural land varied regionally and locally, depending on a wide variety of climatic,

topographic, social and other factors. The trend was one of a slow, but gradually increasing pace of forest clearance.

- 4.19 No evidence for Neolithic settlement or ritual activity is recorded within the study area. Flint flakes retrieved during investigations at Rooks Nest Farm, c.450m to the southeast of the study site, may contain some Late Neolithic flintwork but this is most likely to be Bronze Age (MWK16527). Phase 2 excavations recorded a Bronze Age field system at the site (MRM1628).
- 4.20 As with the earlier prehistoric periods at this time the study site and the surrounding area would have remained heavily wooded as such the area would have been unsuitable for early farming and therefore unlikely to support settlement.
- 4.21 By the 1st millennium, i.e., 1000 BC, the landscape was probably a mix of extensive tracts of open farmland, punctuated by earthwork burial and ceremonial monuments from distant generations, with settlements, ritual areas and defended locations reflecting an increasingly hierarchical society.
- 4.22 Later prehistoric activity in the form of a burnt mound with residual flint has been identified within the study site (Figure 2a, MWK7238, at SU 77676 66280). The site was found during archaeological monitoring for the Arborfield to Barkham Relief Sewer Scheme in 1992 (Figure 2b, EWK205). Although the site was excavated, the excavation was restricted to within the construction easement, troughs and water pits usually associated with burnt mounds were not identified/recorded. Dating to the Bronze Age, burnt mounds are not found in association with settlement, they tend to be isolated features located adjacent to natural water channels and away from population centres.
- 4.23 As detailed in paragraph 4.9 above, investigations undertaken within three parcels at Arborfield Garrison, have recorded evidence for Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age activity/occupation (SC1: MRM1870, V2: MRM18219 and Y: MRM18203). The three parcels are located between c.200m and c.400m west of the study site.
- 4.24 The HER records the discovery of a Bronze Age palstave c.750m to the east of the study site (MRM16377 at SU 785 662).
- 4.25 Within the study area the number of entries on the HER for the Bronze Age is low to moderate. The assessment has noted the same scarcity of artefacts noted in the results from the East Berkshire Archaeological Survey undertaken between 1984 and 1986 and the Barkham Survey undertaken throughout the 1990's (brown cross hatched areas identified on Figure 2b). Only a single sherd of Bronze Age pottery recovered during the Barkham Survey (MWK15485). Taken together, the above sites and finds do not appear to be indicative of intensive prehistoric activity or settlement within the study area throughout the later prehistoric periods.
- 4.26 Overall the potential of the site for the Neolithic can safely be assumed to be low/nil. Specifically regarding Bronze Age evidence the site should be categorised as having a high potential for further evidence associated with the previously discovered, excavated and recorded burnt mound. Whilst burnt mounds are not usually found in association with settlements, given the size of the study site, a potential for evidence of occupation of this period cannot be precluded. On this basis, a moderate potential is identified for remains associated with Bronze Age settlement and/or activity.

Iron Age

- 4.27 Finds and features dating to the Iron Age period are generally more numerous across the study area. The location within the study site boundary of MWK8592, is erroneous and refers to an Iron Age coin found by a 'lady in her back garden in Barkham'.
- 4.28 Archaeological investigations within various parcels at Arborfield Garrison, southwest of the study site, have recorded evidence for Iron Age farmstead occupation (Baird Road Phase 1: MWK15721 at SU 76290 65762) and evidence for surrounding field systems (Bair Road Phase 3: MWK15668 and MWK15614 at SU 76498 65419). One of the pits excavated within the farmstead complex yielded 74

sherds of Iron Age pottery (Baird Road Phase 1: MWK15617). Excavations within Parcel T at the Garrison site recorded a ring ditch remains of an Iron Age roundhouse (MRM17685 and MRM18168). In addition, a single Iron Age pit was recorded within Parcel S1 and S2 (MRM18185). Late Iron Age/early Roman ditches were also recorded during a watching brief on inspection chambers for a new road and excavations for an attenuation pond at the Garrison site (MRM18572).

- 4.29 Evaluation trenching undertaken for the Arborfield Cross Relief Road recorded Late Iron Age/early Roman settlement in the form of a large rectilinear enclosure ditch, a number of smaller ditches and internal features including small post-holes/pits and a ditch terminal (MRM18278).
- 4.30 A quite long lived Iron Age settlement, with continued occupation in the Roman period, is noted 1.1km southwest of the site on the site of the former Whitehall Brick and Tile Works (MWK15550 to MWK15554 at SU 76551 65328).
- 4.31 Another Iron Age settlement, which continued in use throughout the Roman period is identified c.450m to the southeast of the study site at Rooks Nest Farm (MRM16527, MRM16528, MRM16529 and MRM16533 at SU 7880 6588).
- 4.32 A watching brief and evaluation trenching undertaken at The Well House, Barkham Street, c.350m north of the study site, recorded a pit containing a sherd of pottery potentially dating to the Iron Age (MRM16652).
- 4.33 The site's potential to contain evidence of Iron Age activity can reasonably be considered to be moderate. Any surviving remains are likely to consist of evidence of enclosures and field systems. Any remains, if present, are likely to be of low (local) significance.

Roman

- 4.34 Evidence for Roman activity within the study area is generally limited.
- 4.35 A general scatter of Romano-British pottery has been noted during the Barkham Survey which recovered sherds within the study site (1 sherd: MWK15492 at SU 7739 6647 and MWK15493 at SU 77183 66339) and within the wider study area (8 sherds: Barkham Road: MWK15486, 3 sherds: Barking Ride: MWK15488, 1 sherd: Nineteen Acres: MWK15489, 3 sherds: Church Lane: MWK15490, 2 sherds: High Barn Farm: MWK15491, and 2 sherds: Langley Common: MWK15493).
- 4.36 Evaluation trenching within Parcel V1 at Arborfield Garrison recorded evidence of Roman activity in the form of ditches, and gullies (MRM18214). Within Parcel Y a single post-hole of Roman date was recorded (MRM18203).
- 4.37 Archaeological evaluation trenching and a watching brief undertaken during the construction of Barkham Ride, c.350m southeast of the study site, recorded evidence of Iron Age occupation continuing into the Roman period (MRM16533).
- 4.38 Archaeological excavations at the Whitehall Brick and Tile Works, c.1.1km southwest of the study site, recorded several phases of occupation dating from the Mid/Late Iron Age to the 2nd century AD (MWK15550 to MWK15554).
- 4.39 A small programme of evaluation trenching at No.14 Sheerlands Road c. 1.1km southwest of the study site, comprising 5 trenches, revealed two intercutting gullies of Late Iron Age/Roman date. A follow up watching brief undertaken on the site recorded a single undated gully (ERM1229).
- 4.40 Recent evaluation trenching at Barkham Farm recorded a post-hole containing a single fragment of Roman tile (MRM1858).
- 4.41 The East Berkshire Survey and Barkham Survey recorded the discovery of small assemblages of Roman pottery during fieldwalking within the study area. As with the later prehistoric periods, the above finds do not appear to be indicative of intensive activity or settlement within the study area during the

Roman period. The archaeological potential of the site for Roman settlement evidence is therefore categorised as low/nil.

- 4.42 Overall, a low potential is identified for remains associated with Roman settlement and a moderate potential is identified for Roman field ditches of low (local) significance.

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

- 4.43 Arborfield is not recorded in Domesday (Open Domesday, 2016). The Great Forest of Windsor would have covered the eastern half of Berkshire as far as Hungerford. As late as 1300 AD the parishes of Newland, Bear or Bere Wood, Winnersh and Hurst were part of the Windsor Forest, a royal hunting park from the late 11th century.
- 4.44 Barkham is briefly mentioned in Domesday (1086) as Bercheham or Beorcham, with the latter meaning Birch Tree Meadow.
- 4.45 A reference in a deed dated 1190 refers to Edburghfeld considered to mean open land belonging to a woman named Hereburgh. However, the literal translation of Arborfield is a shelter or barn within a field.
- 4.46 It is believed, though unproven, that a Saxon village mentioned in 952 (Beorcham) was centred upon St James Church (MWK1315 at SU 78400 66420). The church itself was constructed in 1862 and is believed to stand on an earlier site however, non-intrusive investigation of the church has identified elements dating back to the 13th century but no earlier.
- 4.47 Fieldwalking on land to the east of Barkham Street, within the study site, recovered some early Medieval pottery sherds which may be Saxon in date (EWK28 and MWK15487 at SU 78259 66199, Figures 2a and 2b).
- 4.48 In the Early Medieval period it is possible that two manors existed at Barkham, both of which comprise moated enclosures which are protected as Scheduled Monuments (*Moated site north of the Moat House*: SM Ref. 1009886 and *Moated site and associated enclosure at Church Farm*: SM Ref. 1013181).
- 4.49 The Medieval moated site over 600m to the east of the study site, contains Church Cottages, 1 and 2 (which are Grade II listed) and are built within the former great hall.
- 4.50 A few sherds of Medieval pottery were retrieved during the extensive fieldwalking survey (East Berkshire and Barkham Surveys) however none are recorded from the study site.
- 4.51 A Park Pale, believed to be associated with Barkham Manor, is located c.400m north-east of the study site. The eastern and northern boundaries of the park are defined by a bank and ditch that are considered to be Medieval in origin (MRM18181 at SU 7772 6740). The fieldwalking results suggest a very limited settlement of the area. At this time settlement rubbish and human waste would have been spread across the fields through an agricultural practice known as 'manuring' and near large settlements this generates a lot of pottery sherds scattered across the landscape, this pattern is not observed in either of the fieldwalking surveys (East Berkshire and Barkham).
- 4.52 It is highly probable that a small hamlet existed at Barkham however, given the distance of the main site from the known core of historic settlement, the potential of the study site for the Anglo-Saxon/Early Medieval and Medieval evidence is low, with evidence that the local environment comprised woodland and agricultural land. Any surviving evidence is likely to be related to evidence of agricultural activity and land division of low (local) significance.

Post-Medieval & Modern (including map regression exercise)

- 4.53 In the Post-Medieval period cartographic sources are useful in understanding the historic land use and past phases of built development within the study site. This section discusses the available mapping from the late 18th Century onwards.
- 4.54 The 1761 Rocque Map of Berkshire (Fig.4) illustrates the study site as lying southeast of Langley Common, falling across an area of enclosed agricultural land. Barkham is shown as a small hamlet some distance to the east-northeast of the study site. The study site lies within a rural-agricultural landscape characterised by cultivated fields, woodland and small-scale, scattered settlement.
- 4.55 The 1831 Barkham Estate Map (Fig.5) does not cover the study site, but illustrates its eastern vicinity at this time as being entirely rural-agricultural.
- 4.56 The 1840 Barkham Tithe Map (Fig. 6) shows the study site as dominated by a large coppice, named *Kitchem Coppice* (Plot 93), other parts of the study site are under arable cultivation. The study site does not contain any buildings at this time. To the immediate north-west of the study site are houses fronting Langley Common Road. A small farmstead flanks the westernmost corner of the study site. Some distance to the east, a model farmstead is shown (47a). Further farmstead buildings are shown to the east of Barkham Street. In the north-northwest along Barkham Street, the village has undergone a small expansion.
- 4.57 The 1900 Ordnance Survey (OS) Map (Fig.7) appears to show an expansion of the plantation/coppice, now called *Kidgem Copse*, within the study site. The western ends of the study site are under arable cultivation as enclosed irregular fields. There has been a small expansion of built development along the western boundary of the Study site on Langley Common Road. A farmstead remains to the immediate west of the study site boundary. In the east, the earlier farmstead is named as Barkham Square. Further east is Church Farm & moat (now a Scheduled Monument, NHLE ref. 1013181), together with St James's Church. The immediate vicinity of the study site is illustrated as remaining rural-agricultural at the start of the 20th Century.
- 4.58 The OS Map of 1912 (Fig.8) shows no notable change within the study site or immediate vicinity other than the construction of 'keeper's cottage' off the northern boundary of the study site. The 1932 OS Map (Fig.9) indicates some alteration and modernisation of farmsteads across the vicinity of the study site, together with construction of limited new development to the south of the study site and within the Barkham settlement area.
- 4.59 The 1961 OS Map (Fig.10) shows considerable change within the vicinity of the study site. Modern commercial and residential development is shown to have expanded across the western and southern vicinity of the study site. In the east, beyond Commonfield Lane, agricultural land remains. The study site is also flanked by agricultural land. North-northeast of the study site on Barkham Street and Barkham Road, the village of Barkham remains a small, disbursed settlement. Within the study site much of the copse/plantation woodland is shown to have been cleared.
- 4.60 The 1971 OS Map (Fig.11) shows an intensification of modern development to the south/southwest of the study site. Some further built development is also shown to the northwest and northeast of the study site.
- 4.61 The aerial photograph of 2004 (Fig.12) shows the study site as being cultivated and stripped of earlier field boundaries, but divided by a roughly north-south aligned, narrow strip of woodland at its eastern end. The southern vicinity of the study site is characterised by extensive modern, primarily commercial built development. A primarily modern residential area of built development flanks the study site in the northwest. The study site remains flanked by agricultural land in the north, northeast and east. Furthermore, no notable change is shown on the 2014 and 2022 aerial photographs (Google Earth Images: Figs 13 and 14).

- 4.62 Built development continued to expand across the southern vicinity of the study site in the early 21st Century. Within the study site, a planted boundary has been re-established along the western edge of what had been the copse/plantation woodland. Little other change is indicated within the study site or its vicinity to the east, west and north.
- 4.63 The historic mapping and HER data suggest that the site has remained as woodland or open agricultural land throughout the Post-Medieval and more recent periods. Based on the above, a potential is identified for Post-Medieval field boundaries of low/negligible (local) significance.

LiDAR Data

- 4.64 The LiDAR data plot (Figure 3) shows linear undulations across the majority of the study site. These undulations are likely to be the ploughed-out remnants of former field boundaries. Within the area of the recorded burnt mound there appears to be two undulations perpendicular to the stream. These undulations could be further evidence of burnt mounds in this area. No other potential archaeological features were identified.

Historic Landscape Character

- 4.65 The historic landscape character within the central and southern parts of the study site as *Paddocks and Animal Enclosures* with pockets of *Ancient Woodland* (see Figure 2c). The far north-eastern corner of the main site is illustrated as *Country House* (the grounds of Barkham Square). The north-western part of the study site is illustrated as *Pasture and Grassland*. The historic landscape character of the study site is considered to be of limited historical interest.

Assessment of Significance – Designated Heritage Assets

- 4.66 Existing national policy guidance for archaeology (the NPPF as referenced in section 2) enshrines the concept of the ‘significance’ of heritage assets. Significance as defined in the NPPF centres on the value of an archaeological or historic asset for its ‘heritage interest’ to this or future generations.
- 4.67 In terms of relevant nationally designated heritage assets, no World Heritage sites, Historic Wreck or Historic Battlefield sites have been identified either within the study site itself, or within the vicinity of the study site.
- 4.68 The Scheduled *Moated site north of the Moat House* comprises below ground archaeological remains only. There is no intervisibility between the study site and the Scheduled Monument. The proposed development will have no impact on this designated heritage asset or its setting.
- 4.69 The *Moated site and associated enclosure at Church Farm* comprises a moat ditch and below ground archaeological remains. There is no intervisibility between the proposed residential development and the Scheduled Monument. Principally, this is due to the mature and extensive tree cover around the boundaries of the monument itself, the intervening distance and the intervening built development along Barkham Street. Overall, the proposed development will have no impact on this designated heritage asset or its setting.

Assessment of Significance – Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 4.70 There are no locally designated archaeological sites on or particularly near the study site as designated by Wokingham Borough Council.

- 4.71 Based on current evidence, this assessment has identified a high potential for further evidence of prehistoric burnt mounds of low significance, a moderate potential for the remains of Bronze Age occupation/activity of low/medium significance and a moderate potential for Iron Age and Roman field ditches and enclosures of low significance. A potential is also identified for Medieval and Post-Medieval field boundaries of low/negligible significance. A low archaeological potential is identified for all other periods.
- 4.72 The geophysical surveying of the study site (Appendix 2) has identified numerous features likely relating to the historical cultivation of the study site, but no features of apparent high archaeological interest or significance.
- 4.73 As identified by desk based work and nearby archaeological investigations, and prior to considering archaeological potential by period and the likely significance of any archaeological remains which may be present within the study site is summarised in table form below:

Period:	Identified Archaeological Potential and Likely Significance (if present):
Palaeolithic & Mesolithic	Low potential, Low (local) significance. Any palaeolithic or Mesolithic remains present are likely to be stray finds and residual material.
Neolithic and Bronze Age	Low potential for Neolithic remains. High potential for the remains of burnt mounds of Low (local) significance. Moderate potential for Bronze Age remains evidencing occupation/activity of Low/Medium (local/regional) significance.
Iron Age	Moderate potential for Iron Age remains. Any remains surviving may be related to evidence of land division, enclosures for agricultural purposes and are therefore likely to be of Low (local) significance depending on the form, character, and level of survival of the remains.
Roman	Low potential for settlement related remains. Moderate potential for Roman field ditches of Low (local) significance
Anglo-Saxon, Early Medieval and Medieval	Low potential for settlement related remains. Moderate potential for remains of Medieval field ditches of Low (local) significance
Post-Medieval and Modern	Moderate potential for Post-Medieval field ditches of Low/Negligible (local) significance.

5 SITE CONDITIONS, THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSETS

Site Conditions

- 5.1 The study site comprises agricultural land and small areas of woods lying to the east of Barkham Road. The study site is bound by modern development in the south and west and by agricultural land in the north and east.
- 5.2 The removal and grubbing out of plantation woodland in the study site in the late 20th century is likely to have had a severe and widespread archaeological impact resulting in the almost complete removal of archaeological assets at shallow depth. The potential for archaeological survival in these areas is likely to be poor.
- 5.3 Agricultural and/or horticultural use of the study site can be considered to have had a widespread below ground impact. Much of this disturbance is likely to have been fairly shallow and therefore the potential for archaeological survival in these areas is considered to be good.

Proposed Development

- 5.4 The study site is proposed for residential led development with associated access and landscaping (Plate 1).



Plate 1: Proposed Parameter Plan.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Archaeological Assets

- 5.5 The proposed development will result in no change to the settings of any designated archaeological assets and therefore there will be no impact on their significance.
- 5.6 Based on current evidence, this assessment has identified a high potential for further evidence of prehistoric burnt mounds of low significance, a moderate potential for the remains of Bronze Age occupation/activity of low/medium significance and a moderate potential for Iron Age and Roman field ditches and enclosures of low significance. A potential is also identified for Medieval and Post-Medieval field boundaries of low/negligible significance. A low archaeological potential is identified for all other periods.
- 5.7 The removal and grubbing out of woodland within the study site in the late 20th century is likely to have had a severe archaeological impact and therefore the potential for archaeological survival is likely to be poor. Elsewhere, historic agricultural activity has likely caused widespread disturbance to archaeological horizons. Much of this disturbance is likely to have been fairly shallow and therefore the potential for archaeological survival in these areas is considered to be good.
- 5.8 Proposals comprise the construction of a large residential led development with multi-functional parkland.
- 5.9 The proposed development has the potential to impact below ground archaeological remains of local/regional significance through landscaping and excavations for foundations, services and attenuation.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Barkham Square: Land at Barkham Road, Barkham has been assessed for its below ground archaeological potential.
- 6.2 In terms of relevant nationally significant designated heritage assets, no World Heritage Sites, Historic Wreck or Historic Battlefield study sites have been identified within the study site, or within the vicinity of the study site.
- 6.3 The nearest Scheduled Monuments include a Moated site north of the Moat House (SM Ref. 1009886) over 500m southwest of the study site and a Moated site and associated enclosure at Church Farm (SM Ref. 1013181), located c.650m to the east of the study site.
- 6.4 The Scheduled Moated site north of the Moat House comprises below ground archaeological remains only. There is no intervisibility between the study site and the Scheduled Monument. The proposed development will have no impact on this designated heritage asset or its setting.
- 6.5 The Moated site and associated enclosure at Church Farm comprises a moat ditch and below ground archaeological remains. There is no intervisibility between the study site and the Scheduled Monument. Principally, this is due to the mature and extensive tree cover around the boundaries of the monument itself, the intervening distance and the intervening built development along Barkham Street. Overall, the proposed development will have no impact on this designated heritage asset or its setting.
- 6.6 There are no locally designated archaeological sites on or particularly near the study site as designated by Wokingham Borough Council.
- 6.7 Based on current evidence, this assessment has identified a high potential for further evidence of prehistoric burnt mounds of low significance, a moderate potential for the remains of Bronze Age occupation/activity of low/medium significance and a moderate potential for Iron Age and Roman field ditches and enclosures of low significance. A potential is also identified for Medieval and Post-Medieval field boundaries of low/negligible significance. A low archaeological potential is identified for all other periods.
- 6.8 The geophysical surveying of the study site (Appendix 2) has identified numerous features likely relating to the historical cultivation of the study site, but no features of apparent high archaeological interest or significance. The geophysical survey included areas of land that are not included within the application site boundary and have not been not discussed here.
- 6.9 The removal and grubbing out of woodland in study site in the late 20th century is likely to have had a severe archaeological impact and therefore the potential for archaeological survival is likely to be poor in this area. Elsewhere, historic agricultural activity has likely caused widespread disturbance to archaeological horizons. Much of this disturbance is likely to have been fairly shallow and therefore the possibility of archaeological survival in these areas is considered to be good.
- 6.10 The proposed development has the potential to impact below ground archaeological remains of local/regional significance through landscaping and excavations for foundations, services and attenuation.
- 6.11 In view of the size of the study site, and as the site has remained largely unaffected by previous development throughout its documented history, it is anticipated that the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority will require mitigation in advance of development.
- 6.12 An archaeological trial trench evaluation will be required, focussed within the areas of proposed impact, with further works depending upon the results of evaluation. The scope and timing of such works should be discussed with the archaeological advisor in due course.

Sources Consulted

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Cartographic

1761 Rocque Map of Berkshire

1831 Barkham Estate Map (partial coverage)

1840 Barkham parish Tithe Map

1900 Ordnance Survey

1912 Ordnance Survey

1932 Ordnance Survey

1961 Ordnance Survey

1971 Ordnance Survey

2010 Aerial Photograph (Google Earth Image)

2014 Aerial Photograph (Google Earth Image)

2022 Aerial Photograph (Google Earth Image)

FIGURES