

# BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

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## Planning CONSULTATION RESPONSE – Application 242092 - Heathlands Farm

*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. There is a crop mark, c.200m to the south of the proposal area, shown on aerial photographs of a possible ring-ditch. C.330m northeast a Prehistoric site has been identified during field survey. Further aerial photographs show enclosure crop marks c.700m to east. These show that the area was subject to Prehistoric activity and has potential for further evidence to survive.

An initial impact assessment of the site, requested by Berkshire Archaeology, was unable to verify sufficient depth and severity of disturbance caused by the current use for polytunnels, therefore it is possible that archaeology may remain and this needs further exploration.

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 211 of the NPPF(2023) 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.

The proposed development will involve the removal of the polytunnels which currently prevent full assessment of the archaeological survival on site, and installation of solar panels which, although each panel has a small impact individually, over a whole field amounts to widespread disturbance. Therefore, the level of mitigation necessary for the site needs to be further investigated through initial trial trenching, followed if required, by a phased program of work; this is detailed below.

In view of the nature and scale of the development and the possibility that, if archaeology found, it may merit preservation in situ, an archaeological Scheme of Works 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. This is likely to include initial trial trench assessment to test and further explore the impact assessment findings and potential remaining for archaeological survival, and a follow on evaluation if potential remains. It should cover all impact aspects of the development, including, site access, compound, services, and drainage, etc, as well as the solar panels themselves.

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

*Linden Ellicott*  
*Archaeology Officer*