

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

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25th November 2024

Planning CONSULTATION RESPONSE – Application 242598 Recreation Ground Millworth Lane

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 lies in an area with extensive Prehistoric activity. Prehistoric worked flint has been found c160m and c300m to the north whilst Field Walking to the east of the site, c.230m, has established extensive Mesolithic to Bronze Age evidence of lithics, with worked flints, cores and blades. C.175m to the east, a number of cropmarks suggest an area with significant past activity including enclosures, field system, pits and settlement. Investigations in this area have identified a late-Iron Age to early-Roman settlement and field system c.200-310m east of the proposal site. An early-Iron Age settlement has also been excavated c.420m to the west, where evidence was also excavated for late-Neolithic to early-Bronze Age ring-ditch and middle-Bronze Age pits. These suggest that the whole landscape was actively used during the Prehistoric and it is possible, given the early-Iron Age to the west and late-Iron Age to the east, that a middle-Iron Age site remains undiscovered in this area.

Although this is not a largescale development, it is likely the plot has never previously been developed and therefore any archaeology may remain undisturbed below ground.

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.

Although the proposed development is for a sports grounds, it will result in significant ground disturbance including for pitches, courts, carpark, tracks, utilities, and drainage/landscaping.

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, 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 should cover all aspects of the development.

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

Linden Ellicott
Archaeology Officer