

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

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23rd December 2024

Planning Application CONSULTATION RESPONSE – 243099 Land North of Reading Road Arborfield

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. Berkshire Archaeology welcomed the Desk-based Assessment submitted with the application; however I feel that the potential for archaeology will require mitigation. The site lies in an area with numerous cropmarks which suggest the wider area has been a focus of activity in the past, including possible enclosures c.70m east, linear marks c.250m northwest, settlement enclosures, trackway, and field system c.450-550m north. A Roman road runs north/south c.520m west of the site. There is evidence that St Bartholomew's Church c.550m northwest has 13th century origins and is likely to relate to a medieval settlement and Medieval stray finds, the nearest just c.9m outside the site boundary, have been found in the area.

The site itself does not appear to have been previously developed, therefore any archaeology below the plough line may remain undisturbed.

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 218 of the NPPF(2024) 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, Medieval 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, field evaluation through trial trenching would represent an appropriate initial phase of work in order to determine the archaeological potential, levels of previous truncation, and the need for any further phases of work.

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

Linden Ellicott
Archaeology Officer