

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

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Planning Consultation Response – Application 211813 58 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AA

This is a planning consultation response regarding the above application from Berkshire Archaeology. 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 the buried archaeological heritage. Listed buildings and the historic built environment and landscape are matters for the Council's Conservation Officer.

In agreement with the well-written Desk Based Assessment (TVAS 2021) submitted with this application, I recommend that this proposal for a four-storey building has an archaeological implication. I would recommend that an archaeological condition is attached, should permission be granted, to secure a scheme of archaeological works to take place prior to the commencement of construction.

This recommendation is based on the high archaeological potential of this site, as illustrated by the DBA. The DBA highlights that there is potential for archaeological assets to be present on the site from all periods, with significant remains found in the vicinity including preserved Early Neolithic wooden stakes, Iron Age pottery, a possible Roman cemetery, and Medieval remains related to the Abbey wharves, all found during excavations at Crane Wharf c. 50 m to the west of the site. In the wider area there are some 366 monuments, finds, and structures recorded as having archaeological and historic interest in the Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record within a 500 m radius of the site, including a number of scheduled monuments and listed buildings such as the remains of Reading's Cluniac Abbey, founded in 1121, dissolved in 1538, and located c. 150 m north of the site. The proposed works will involve areas of ground reduction and excavation for foundations and for utilities. These impacts may have the effect of truncating, damaging, or entirely removing unrecorded archaeological deposits.

Paragraph 194 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF; revised July 2021), states that "where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation." Further, Paragraph 205 of the NPPF 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." I would therefore recommend that, given the archaeological potential of the site, and the proposed impacts, it would be in line with National and Local Planning Policy to attach a condition requiring a scheme

of archaeological works, should the proposal be permitted. My recommended wording for the condition is as follows:

Condition: No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have secured the implementation of a phased scheme of archaeological works (which may comprise more than one phase of works) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.

Reason: The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. The condition will ensure that any archaeological remains within the site are adequately investigated and recorded in order to advance our understanding of the significance of any buried remains to be lost and in the interest of protecting the archaeological heritage of the Borough.

We would be happy to discuss the precise scheme of works with the applicant or their archaeological consultant. This would likely take the form of a scheme of evaluation trenching across the site where the construction will impact below ground deposits, prior to the commencement of any construction. Should significant remains be encountered there may be a need for a further phase of works and post excavation analysis.

I trust this is satisfactory, but please do contact me should you require anything more.

Best regards,

Dr Edward Peveler

Archaeology Officer, Berkshire Archaeology