

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

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16th September 2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSE re:-

PL/26/1121 138-141 142-143 & 144 Friar Street Reading RG1 1EX

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 or Built Heritage 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. As per the previous application for this site, and as noted in the 2022 DBA (now out of date) submitted for that application, there is potential for both Prehistoric and Medieval remains. Archaeological investigation at other properties along Friar Street have evidenced Medieval activity, including 12th century hearth and structural elements, 14th century deposits, and Medieval to Post-Medieval features and pottery. Nearby findspots suggest that Prehistoric activity was also associated with the area, and the gravel terraces are known to have been a focus of activity, these include Palaeolithic and Neolithic worked flints, and Iron Age spot finds.

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 Policy HE10,1(b) of the NPPF(2026) which states that *'The applicant should record and advance understanding of the significance of the asset to be lost in a manner proportionate to its importance and the potential impact upon it; and should make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible by depositing it in the relevant Historic Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other local depositary'*. And Policy HE10,2 which states that *'Heritage assets with archaeological interest should be preserved in situ where feasible. Where an asset cannot be preserved or managed on-site, appropriate provision should be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset, which should be undertaken by suitably-qualified individuals or organisations'*.

Condition:

A) No development shall take place/commence until a programme of archaeological work, informed by a Desk Based Assessment, 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

Berkshire Archaeology

An Archaeological Service for: Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, Reading Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council & Bracknell Forest Council

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 and Medieval remains. A programme of archaeological work is required in order to assess and, where necessary, mitigate the impacts of the development, and to ensure that the significance of any archaeological remains is properly understood. This is in accordance with national and local planning policy.

The proposed development will comprise a major redesign of the site, with extensive ground impacts for foundations and utilities. Therefore, it is advised that, in the first instance, an assessment of the potential impacts on archaeology should be made, by means of a Desk Based Assessment, which although having a wider area summary, should focus on the site, previous impacts, proposed impacts and overall potential. This assessment will then inform on the level of mitigation necessary for the site.

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 likely 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.

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

Linden Ellicott
Archaeology Officer