

**From:** Smith, Roland <Roland.Smith@reading.gov.uk> on behalf of Smith, Roland  
**Sent on:** Tuesday, April 14, 2020 10:59:15 AM  
**To:** Conlon, Brian <Brian.Conlon@reading.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Planning application 200328 - Vastern Court, Caversham Road, Reading

Dear Brian,

Re: Planning application 200328 - Vastern Court, Caversham Road, Reading

Thank you for consulting Berkshire Archaeology regarding the above application. I am pleased to provide the following advice but please note that my comments relate solely to the buried archaeological heritage and not to the historic built environment, which is a matter for your Conservation Officer.

In accordance with Paragraph 189 of the NPPF, the applicant has submitted with their application an 'Historic Environment Assessment' (Technical Appendix 2.5), prepared by MOLA and dated December 2019. In summary, the assessment concludes that the 1.8ha site has limited archaeological potential, primarily to contain post-medieval reclamation works and remains of the former GWR railway works, the latter of which may be of particular interest. The assessment also concludes that the site has a low potential for prehistoric remains. Limited geotechnical data indicates thick deposits of 'made ground' above alluvium and gravel. The assessment recommends an archaeological watching brief during development, following the monitoring of geotechnical works.

In Berkshire Archaeology's view the conclusions of the assessment are reasonable but perhaps do not fully acknowledge the archaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of the alluvial deposits, given the site's location within the archaeologically-rich Middle Thames Valley. However, it is acknowledged that the site has had a significant recent development history, although I agree that the potential interest in any remains of the former GWR works should not be underestimated.

I agree that no further assessment through field survey is required at this stage and that a programme of archaeological work can be secured by an appropriately worded condition should the proposal be permitted. The following condition is recommended:

'No development shall take place, other than demolition to ground level, until a written scheme of investigation setting out a programme of archaeological work, which may comprise more than one phase of work, has been submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The development shall be

undertaken in accordance with the programme of archaeological work agreed pursuant to this condition.'

In accordance with the recommendations of the assessment report, archaeological monitoring of geotechnical works would be an appropriate first stage, alongside some geo-archaeological boreholes. The results of this work can inform the extent and scope of further archaeological investigation which may include targeted evaluation trenching if the results merit it.

I trust that this is satisfactory. I would be happy to discuss this further with you or the applicant if that was helpful.

Regards,

Roland

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