

## **Topic Paper 10 - Archaeology, Conservation and the Historic Environment**

**August 2004**

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*This document is one of the supporting topic papers of West Berkshire Council's supplementary guidance series 'Delivering Investment from Growth – West Berkshire Council's approach to securing developer contributions towards local infrastructure, services and amenities'. It is intended as a guide for landowners, developers and residents and sets out how the Council will deal with planning applications where a contribution towards archaeology, conservation and the historic environment will be sought.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Government's policies on the conservation of the historic environment are set out in PPG15 *Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994). It states that the protection of all aspects of the historic environment should be taken fully into account both in the formulation of planning policies and in development control. The physical survivals of our past should be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity. It attaches particular importance to early consultation with the local authority on development proposals which would affect historic sites and structures, whether listed buildings, conservation areas, parks and gardens, battlefields or the wider historic landscape. Developers should assess the likely impacts of their proposals on the special interest of the site or structure in question, and provide such information as necessary to understand the significance of a site or structure before an application is determined.
- 1.2 Its policies on archaeology are similarly set out in PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* (1990). It states that there should be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation of nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings. In appropriate circumstances it is reasonable for planning authorities to require an applicant for planning permission to provide information on the character and extent of archaeological remains on site. Where important remains are threatened by development, planning authorities may enter into legal agreements or impose conditions to secure the excavation, recording and publication of archaeological remains where these will be destroyed by development

### **2.0 Stewardship of the Historic Environment**

- 2.1 West Berkshire has a very rich cultural heritage. The buildings, townscapes, landscapes, collections and archives that comprise the heritage of West Berkshire include many that are nationally and regionally significant. The heritage of West Berkshire contributes to the overall quality of life of everyone in the District. It represents many of the essential characteristics of the area which contribute to the pleasures of living and working in or visiting West Berkshire. The future of this valuable resource depends on public understanding and appreciation - this is critical for its long-term care and well

being.

2.2 To this end the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (adopted June 2002) aims:

- To maintain and strengthen the commitment to 'stewardship' of the historic environment in order to sustain environmental quality and to reflect this in policies, decisions and the allocation of resources;
- To have special regard to the preservation of listed buildings;
- To encourage the use of traditional building materials and techniques and to conserve the historic building forms typical of West Berkshire
- To preserve and enhance the Conservation Areas in West Berkshire. Any new development in Conservation Areas needs to be appropriate and sympathetic to the special character of the area. It must also address the quality of the townscape as well as the protection of individual buildings and preserving a sense of place;
- To support the preservation, restoration and management of historic parks and gardens including their settings;
- To support the preservation and management of historic landscapes and battlefield sites
- To ensure the archaeological heritage is preserved and properly managed.

### **3.0 Assessing the contribution**

3.1 Any development, whether residential or commercial, which is associated with a site or issue of cultural or heritage significance (including archaeological remains) will need to be assessed individually.

3.2 Within the context of the development proposals, if the Council considers that archaeological or other works are required and that these cannot be appropriately secured through planning conditions, then the Council will seek to secure them through planning obligations.

3.3 The costs associated with such obligations will need to be individually assessed for each project/development. In most cases this will normally mean a cash commission of the relevant programme of work. In other cases it may mean that control of a sensitive site through an appropriate legal agreement might be appropriate in order to safeguard its future in the public interest. In addition, contributions to capital or revenue costs may also be appropriate for site management and/or on or off-site management/research/interpretation schemes such as:

- Historic Landscape Character Assessment
- Monument Management Project
- Projects identified through the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan
- Small Towns Survey
- SMR database enhancement and environment surveys

## **4.0 Archaeology**

- 4.1 Where planning applications affecting a site identified as one of known or potential archaeological sensitivity are submitted and there is insufficient information to establish the potential impact of the proposed development on the archaeological remains, the applicant will be required to undertake an appropriate evaluation before the application is determined.
- 4.2 Where planning conditions are not appropriate obligations will be used to secure the protection and/or investigation of archaeological remains in advance of development. For example, it may be appropriate to secure an area containing significant remains so as it is protected in perpetuity and incorporated into the design of the scheme. The best way to safeguard an archaeological site is for it to be preserved *in situ* and positively managed. Excavation is very much a second best option as although knowledge can be increased through this process, the site is destroyed. An obligation may, therefore, require the investigation, recording and excavation of any archaeological features and finds. There may also be occasions where obligations should be used to secure the conservation of archaeological finds recovered and/or the interpretation of the results of archaeological investigation through publication, touring exhibition or display. Contributions to existing Museums or other buildings and facilities, or to new buildings or facilities to enable their touring exhibition or Museum display might also therefore be appropriate.
- 4.3 It is the responsibility of the developer to pay for any and all archaeological work required. This will include any fieldwork, the analysis of findings after fieldwork, conservation of objects where appropriate, report writing and publication, museum archiving, and any educational material required to explain the site or findings to the public. The Heritage (Archaeology) Service can provide a list of archaeological organisations available to carry out work in West Berkshire. The scope of any work that needs to be done should be agreed in advance with the Heritage (Archaeology) Service.

## **5.0 Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens, Historic Battlefields and the wider historic landscape**

- 5.1 Where planning conditions are not appropriate, obligations will be used to enable restoration enhancement and/or other works to be carried out to a listed building or to enable restoration, enhancement and/or other works to be carried out on buildings, structures, or other land in a Conservation Area in order to conserve or enhance its character.
- 5.2 Similarly, obligations will be used to enable the restoration/enhancement and/or other works to be carried out to Historic Parks and Gardens, and to enable the preservation/management and/or other works to Historic Battlefields, locally significant historic features and the wider historic landscape.
- 5.3 There may also be occasions where obligations will be used to secure the off-site interpretation of particular sites through publication (e.g. cycle/walks

leaflets, website development and/or enhancement), touring exhibition or display.

## **6.0 Museums and Heritage Facilities**

- 6.1 Where appropriate, and in accordance with thresholds and other provisions set out in respect of contributions towards community facilities set out in Topic Paper 5, the Council will seek the provision and/or enhancement of museums and/or other heritage facilities within the District or contributions towards such provision. Such facilities may include the provision of space in new community buildings; adaptation, or extension of existing museums or other buildings to afford locations across the District suitable for the display of temporary or permanent museum or local history exhibitions or of archaeological discoveries such as those resulting from developer funded archaeology in the locality.

## **7.0 Contacts:**

- 7.1 Developers and landowners seeking to submit planning applications for residential and commercial development are encouraged to contact the Council's Heritage and Planning Services directly for site specific advice at an early stage. (Contact details are provided below) Early discussions together with an examination of the Sites and Monuments Record/Historic Environment Records<sup>1</sup> will provide guidance as to whether a site could be developed from an archaeological and/or conservation perspective.

Heritage Service  
West Berkshire Museum  
The Wharf  
Newbury  
Berkshire  
RG14 5AS

Tel: 01635 30511  
Fax: 01635 38535  
e-mail: [heritage@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:heritage@westberks.gov.uk)

Conservation Officer  
West Berkshire Council  
Planning and Transport Strategy  
Market Street  
Newbury  
RG14 5LD

Tel: 01635 519111  
Fax: 01635 519408  
e-mail: [planning@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:planning@westberks.gov.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) / or Historic Environment Records is an index of all known archaeological and historical sites in West Berkshire. It also includes information on fieldwork and excavations (Events), bibliographic references (Sources) and archaeological objects (Finds). Much of this knowledge is stored in a database linked to a computerised map. At present over 5,700 monuments and nearly 5,600 objects are known. However, the record is growing all the time as new sites and objects are discovered. SMR resources also include books, articles and unpublished reports, aerial photographs, and historic and modern maps.