

## CONTENTS

List of Illustrations

Summary

Glossary

1	INTRODUCTION
2	PROJECT BACKGROUND
3	AIMS
4	METHODOLOGY
5	RESULTS
6	NATURE OF THE RECORD
7	CONCLUSIONS
8	BIBLIOGRAPHY
9	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Study Area

Figure 3: Plan and Section of Footings

## **SUMMARY**

**Site name:** Churchgate House, Cookham

**Grid reference:** SU 8971 8544

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 11/12/01 to 14/12/01

**Project manager:** Roy King

**Site Supervisor:** Hugh Beamish

**Site Code:** CHC01

**Area of site:** Approximately 2200m<sup>2</sup>

**Summary of results:** The archaeological watching brief comprised the monitoring of machine and manual groundworks for an extension to the existing domestic dwelling.

The monitoring work revealed a buried soil horizon probably representing natural topography and a footings trench possibly associated with a structure built prior to the more recent phases of Churchgate House or an earlier phase for the existing churchyard wall. In addition, brick footings of possible 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century date were present beneath the north elevation of Churchgate House.

**Monuments identified:** Footings trench for an earlier phase of building.

**Location and reference of archive:** The site archive is currently held by Foundations Archaeology and will be deposited in Reading Museum under Accession Code REDMG:2002.60 in due course.

## **GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

### **Archaeology**

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### **Medieval**

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

### **Natural**

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

### **NGR**

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### **OD**

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea level.

### **OS**

Ordnance Survey

### **Saxon**

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In December 2001 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief to monitor groundworks on land to the rear of Churchgate House, Cookham, Berkshire (NGR: SU 8971 8544). The works were commissioned by Arthurell and Kirkland, Chartered Architects, on behalf of the homeowners Mr and Mrs Pulver.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in response to a proposal to build an extension to the existing dwelling (application no. 00/3635), over land currently used as gardens. The environs of Churchgate House were identified by Babbie Group (on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) as being of potential archaeological importance.
- 1.3 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, revised 2001), Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines) issued by English Heritage (London Region), the Project Design prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2001) and a Brief prepared by Babbie Group (2001).
- 1.4 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief and conforms to the specification set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of The Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).

## **2 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The site area is within the historic Medieval core of Cookham and is adjacent to the churchyard for the Church of the Holy Trinity, which is a Listed Building. Cookham was a royal estate centre and became a significant local settlement in the later Saxon period; with a Minster church. Although given borough status by the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, the settlement declined after the foundation of Maidenhead in the 1280's.
- 2.2 The study area therefore has the potential for the preservation of archaeological features and deposits; particularly those associated with the Saxon and later Medieval settlement, or the Minster Church. The watching brief was designed to note and investigate, where possible, evidence associated with any of the identified potential archaeological elements. The watching brief remit, however, covered the possible discovery of finds and features of all periods.

## **3 AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient

information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains.

3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the Project Design (Foundations Archaeology 2001).

i) to define, identify and record any archaeological deposits within the site area, and date these where possible.

ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site.

iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

4.1 All significant groundworks within the study area were observed by archaeologists whilst being machine excavated by the building contractors. When features or deposits of potential archaeological significance were noted, they were then closely examined, defined, manually excavated and recorded to appropriate standards.

## **5 RESULTS**

5.1 The site area was reduced by up to 1.60m from the modern ground surface by machine in a roughly rectangular shape with dimensions of 4.0m on the east-west axis and 3.5m on the north-south axis (see Figure 2). This reduced area was situated immediately south of the house, between the existing Churchgate House and the churchyard wall to the west.

5.2 Exposed in section and plan was a sequence of make-up layers cut by several modern drains on a northwest-southeast alignment, which emptied into a modern brick soakaway to the north of the reduced area. The stratigraphy of the reduced area was made-up of several layers.

5.3 At the base of the reduced area was (106), which comprised the natural flint gravels, into which the foundation trenches were cut. This was overlaid by (104), a buried dark silty soil layer up to 0.30m thick. Layer (104) probably represents the natural topography of the area prior to the construction of Churchgate House. One sherd of late 12<sup>th</sup> to mid 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery was recovered from (104). The original topsoil/subsoil was then overlaid by two make-up layers, (105) and (101), both of the layers were 0.70m thick. The make-up layers were then in turn sealed by a modern humic garden soil layer, (100), up to 0.20m thick.

- 5.4 In the south baulk of the reduced area were the footings of the brick chimney on the northern side of Churchgate House. Five courses of brick, with a depth of up to 0.40m were visible, although more courses may be present below the limit of the machined area. The bricks were hand-made, of pre-Statute dimensions and may therefore be of 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century date.
- 5.5 In the western edge of the footings was a modern drain trench [107], the cut was approximately on the same alignment as the churchyard wall. Cut by modern drain [107] and overlain by make-up layer (101), was a shallow linear feature [102].
- 5.6 Cut [102] was visible near to the western edge of the area on a north/northeast - south/southwest alignment. The linear was up to 0.30m deep, at least 0.60m wide and was visible for a length of up to 3.50m. Cut [102] contained fill (103); the coarse footings for a wall, which consisted of sub-angular chalk blocks and sub-rounded flint nodules, these were bonded with a mid yellow/brown mortar matrix. The cut was concave in section, with a flattened base. Close examination showed cut [102] to be perpendicular to the brick chimney and the north elevation of Churchgate House. It is possible that [102] represented an earlier structure on the site of the present house or possibly an earlier phase of the existing churchyard wall on a slightly different alignment. No finds were recovered from [102]. The stratigraphic relationship between [102] and the brick footings for the chimney was not exposed due to safety constraints.
- 5.7 No other archaeological features or deposits were present within the excavated area.

## **6 NATURE OF THE RECORD**

- 6.1 The stratigraphic archive for the site consists of the following elements:

Context Sheets  
Sections  
Plans  
Black & White photos  
Colour slides

- 6.2 The on-site methodologies used to recover any evidence were set out in the Foundations Archaeology Project Design (2001). In summary, the following excavation methods were utilised: observation of all substantial groundworks associated with the construction of the new extension. The groundworks were undertaken by contractors both manually and by machine. All site recording was undertaken in accordance with the Project Design. The records are available in the archive.
- 6.3 Following the completion of the watching brief an ordered, indexed, and internally consistent site archive has been compiled in accordance with

Appendix 3 of The Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The buried soil layer (104) probably represents the natural topography of the site prior to the construction of Churchgate House. The sherd of pottery associated with layer (104) was of Medieval date. As the study area is within the limits of the Medieval town of Cookham occasional artefacts (such as pottery) of this date may be expected.
- 7.2 The footings represented by cut [102] may indicate the presence of an earlier structure on the site of the present Churchgate House or possibly an earlier phase of the existing churchyard wall on a slightly different alignment.
- 7.3 The brick footings to the chimney on the north elevation of the house suggest that the chimney (and possibly the adjoining part of the house) was of 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century date.
- 7.4 The watching brief was the most appropriate archaeological response to the development because of the proximity of potential archaeological deposits (particularly the graveyard to the west) and the possibility that any such deposits may be disturbed by the construction of foundation footings and other groundworks.

## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Babtie Group (on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) (2001) *Churchgate House, Cookham: Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief*.

Foundations Archaeology 2001 *Churchgate House, Cookham: Archaeological Watching Brief Project Design*.

IFA 1994 (revised 2001) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations*.  
Institute of Field Archaeologists

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

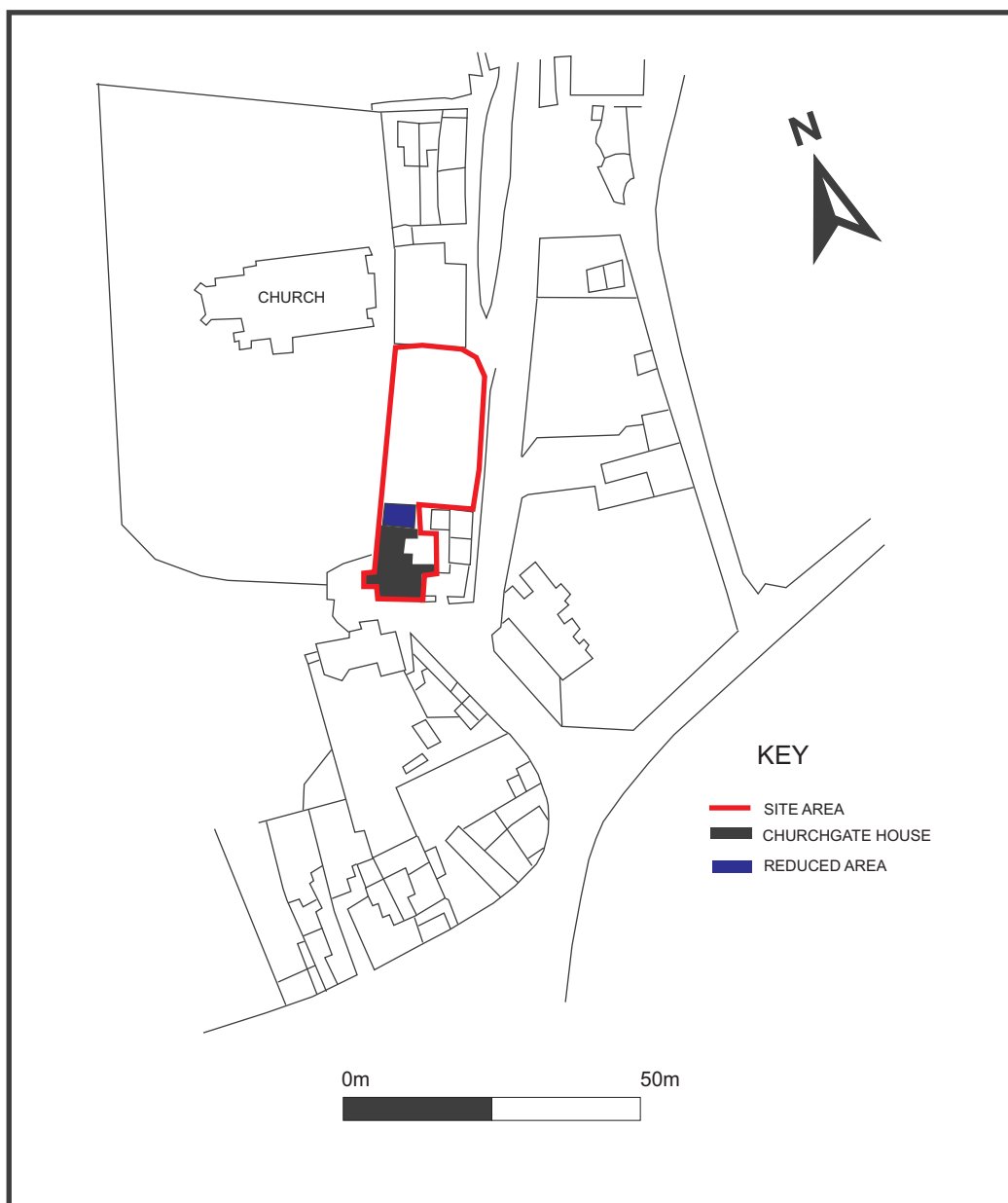
Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Melville Kirkland of Arthurell and Kirkland, Kevin Beachus of Babtie Group and Mr and Mrs Pulver of Churchgate House, Cookham.



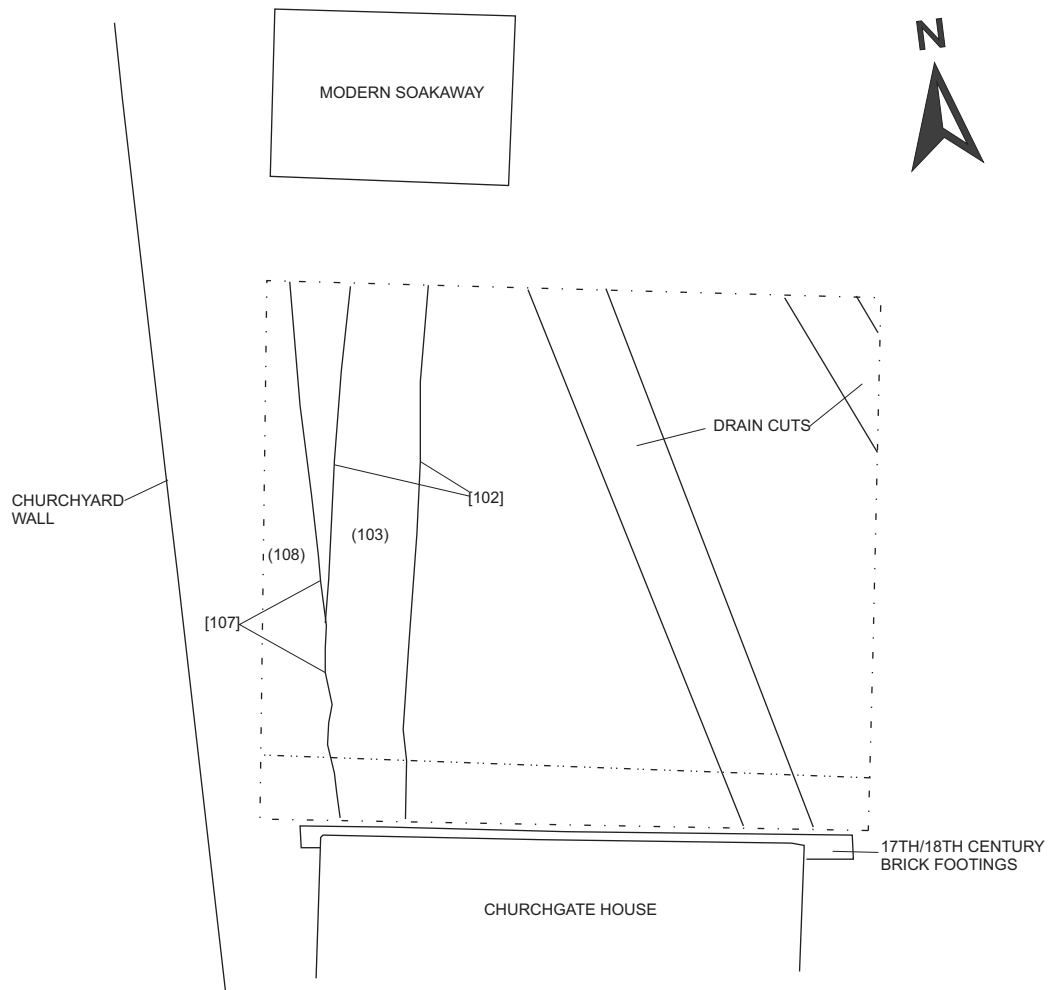
© Crown Copyright  
Reproduced under licence AL523064A

**FIGURE 1: Site Location**

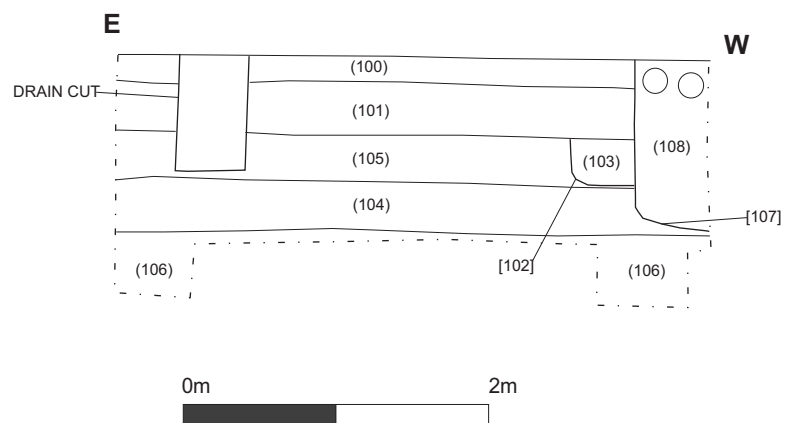




**FIGURE 2: Study Area**



### SOUTH FACING SECTION OF FOOTINGS



**FIGURE 3: Plan and Section of Footings**