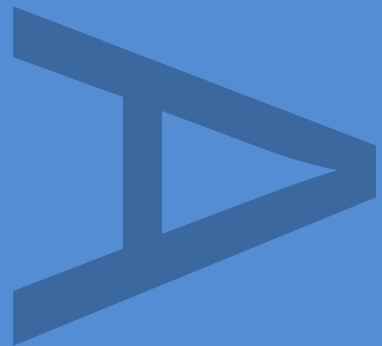


**PHASES 1 & 2 AT READING BLUE
COAT SCHOOL, HOLME PARK
SONNING LANE
SONNING, BERKSHIRE**



ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



**PCA REPORT NO: R12325
SITE CODE: BRBS15**

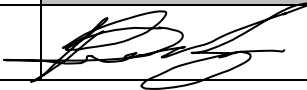
PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

PHASES 1 & 2 AT READING BLUE COAT
SCHOOL, HOLME PARK, SONNING LANE,
SONNING, BERKSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Quality Control

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**PHASES 1 & 2 AT READING BLUE COAT SCHOOL, HOLME PARK, SONNING LANE,
SONNING, BERKSHIRE; AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

Site Code: BRBS15

Local Planning Authority: Wokingham Borough Council

Planning Reference Number: F/2014/2319

Central National Grid Reference: SU 75327 75088

Written by: Kari Bower

Project Manager: Tim Bradley

Commissioning Client: Reading Blue Coat School

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January 2016

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology was commissioned by Huntley Cartwright on behalf of Reading Blue Coat School to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks required to construct new vehicle drop-off lane and turning point and the demolition of two existing buildings to make way for the new Design Technology Centre at Reading Blue Coat School, Holme Park, Sonning Lane, Sonning, Berkshire, RG4 6SU. The works were required by an archaeological condition attached to the planning consent for the development by Wokingham Borough Council.
- 1.2 The groundworks required for the new access road entailed the excavation of a strip of land adjacent to the present road. This was undertaken by a machine operating under continuous archaeological supervision, and entailed the removal of topsoil and subsoil to levels of between 0.10m and 0.80m below the current ground height.
- 1.3 The works required for the new Design and Technology Centre entailed the demolition of two separate buildings and the excavation of foundation trenches for the footings of one single building. This was undertaken by a machine operating under continuous archaeological supervision, and entailed the removal of topsoil and subsoil to levels of between 0.80m and 1.10m below the current ground height.
- 1.4 Three test pits were also dug around and close to the perimeter of the Design and Technology Centre.
- 1.5 Four features with finds ranging in date from the prehistoric to modern periods were observed from both the new vehicle drop off lane and turning point site and new Design and Technology Centre.
- 1.6 A quarter of the new access road and turning point site had been heavily truncated by modern services with the remaining three quarters affected by heavy rooting. Numerous natural depressions and rooting boles were investigated, from which only one archaeological feature was noted.
- 1.7 The foundations and landscaping associated with the two former buildings within the location of the Design and Technology Centre had caused heavy truncation in the north-west end of the site. However one possible ditch/gully terminus, a large refuse pit, a horse burial and the remnants of a dog burial were observed within the southern side of site. All the features are thought to be late post-medieval in date.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology was commissioned by Huntley Cartwright on behalf of Reading Blue Coat School to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new vehicle drop-off lane and turning point and new Design Technology Centre at Reading Blue Coat School, Holme Park, Sonning Lane, Sonning, Berkshire, RG4 6SU. The works were required by an archaeological condition (Condition 17) attached to the planning consent for the development by Wokingham Borough Council.
- 2.2 The new access road and turning point site comprised of a rectangular strip of land, orientated northwest-southeast at the eastern end of the school grounds. The new Design and Technology Centre (henceforth D&T Centre) was located to the southeast of the original manor house and immediately north of the stable block. The school is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid reference SU 75327 75088, and lies off Sonning Lane in Sonning, Berkshire, just to the north west of the A4 and south east of the River Thames.
- 2.3 The area surrounding the site has previously recorded evidence of various periods of prehistoric activity suggesting that the area was within an established prehistoric landscape.
- 2.4 Ellie Leary, Berkshire Archaeology Officer, had recommended that the archaeological potential within the access road and D&T Centre (Phases 1 & 2 of the development) be investigated by means of a proactive observation and recording exercise during development groundworks. A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared for the site in July 2015 by PCA (Bradley 2015), and approved Berkshire Archaeology.
- 2.5 The groundworks required for the new access road entailed the excavation of a strip of land adjacent to the present road. This was undertaken by a machine operating under continuous archaeological supervision, and entailed the removal of topsoil and subsoil to levels of between 0.10m and 0.80m below the current ground height.
- 2.6 The works required for the new D & T site entailed the demolition of two separate buildings and the excavation of foundation trenches for the footings of one single building. This was undertaken by a machine operating under continuous archaeological supervision, and entailed the removal of topsoil and subsoil to levels of between 0.80m and 1.10m below the current ground height.
- 2.7 The site was assigned the code BRBS15. Upon conclusion of all stages of the work the completed archive will be kept at PCA's London Office until a local recipient archive or museum has been agreed.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The full planning background to the site is presented within the Written Scheme of Investigation (Bradley 2015).
- 3.2 Planning permission has been granted by Wokingham Borough Council (planning reference F/2014/2319) for the erection of a new Performing Arts Centre, Ground, Maintenance and Activity Centre, D&T Centre, temporary Drama Studio, plus the formation of a new vehicle drop-off lane and turning point, and associated alterations to parking & landscaping. Demolition of Music Centre & ITC Centre, Way Hall, Drama Studio, Design Technology building, CCF Building & Grounds & Maintenance buildings. The permission for the development is subject to a condition, No. 17, which states:
- 3.3 'No development shall take place on the relevant phase of the development until the applicant has implemented a phased programme of archaeological works (which may include more than one phase of archaeological investigation) has been implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted and approved by the local Planning Authority or otherwise a written statement has been submitted and agreed by the Local Planning Authority justifying why a scheme is not required for the phase of works.
- 3.4 Following discussions between Tim Bradley, PCA and Ellie Leary, Berkshire Archaeology, the scope of archaeological fieldwork required was agreed for each phase of the development. The current phases of the development as reported herein are listed below, together with the relevant fieldwork methodology.
1. Access Road alongside the existing road which was covered by an archaeological watching brief during site stripping.
 2. Design Technology Centre on site of two existing buildings (8 & 13 on Demolition Plan, 8 on Construction Plan), was covered by an archaeological watching brief on construction groundwork
- 3.5 A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared for Phases 1 and 2 of the development in accordance with the above approaches (Bradley 2015) and submitted to Woking Borough Council and Berkshire Archaeology for approval.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 According to the 1:50,000 British Geological Survey the site is at the boundary of the Boyn Hill Gravel Member sands and gravels, superficial deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. These are underlain by a solid geology of Lambeth Group clay, silt and sand. formed approximately 56 to 66 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).
- 4.2 The site lies off Sonning Lane in Sonning, Berkshire, just to the north west of the A4 and south east of the River Thames. Spot heights have been taken from survey drawings of the existing development which were provided by James Poulton of Beard. These have been used to indicate the surface elevations across the access road site which drops by c.1.46m from south-east to north-west, with modern surface level measuring 59.33m OD decreasing to 57.97m OD respectively. The surface elevations across new D&T Centre site drops by c.0.91m from south-west to north-east with modern surface level measuring 58.16m OD decreasing to 57.25m OD respectively.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 No desk-based assessment for the project has been carried out, as such the background is taken from the Written Scheme of Investigation (Bradley 2015).
- 5.2 The surrounding area has previously recorded evidence of various periods of prehistoric activity suggesting that the area was within an established prehistoric landscape. Nearby finds have included the recovery of at least 19 Lower Palaeolithic handaxes from west of the school (although not well provenance), whilst a possible earthwork has been recorded to the northeast.
- 5.3 The site of the school is built to the south of the medieval and earlier ruined Palace of the Bishops of Salisbury and a medieval deer park of the grounds on the estate of Thomas Rich (1601-67), the manor of which was demolished in 1760. Reading Blue Coat School has occupied the site since 1947.
- 5.4 The available evidence suggests that there is some activity in the surrounding vicinity during the prehistoric and Roman periods. The general area also certainly witnessed medieval activity, and apparently of a generally more substantial and longer-lasting nature. The medieval evidence is however confined to fewer locations, probably because much of the local area would have lain within private parkland at the time and thus been unavailable for any significant development. Activity in the general area clearly increased during the post-medieval period, particularly from the 19th century onwards, though the development areas themselves appear to have remained essentially undeveloped lying within garden / parkland throughout the post-medieval period and possibly into the early 20th century. The study areas saw no further development until developed for the construction of the existing buildings, sometime during the early 1960s.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The aims and objectives of the watching brief as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:
- To preserve 'by record' the extent and significance of any surviving archaeological features and deposits within the stage 1 & 2 development areas.
 - Insofar as possible within the methodological constraints, the aims and objectives will be to explain any chronological, spatial or functional relationships between the structures/remains identified during the Stage 1 & 2 fieldwork, and to link the archaeological results with the data already recovered in the wider area. Equally the results of the watching brief phase of work may lead to further research questions when the later phases of the development are undertaken.
- 6.2 All works were undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out by Historic England and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.
- 6.3 All invasive construction groundworks at the site which threaten potential archaeological deposits were monitored under archaeological watching brief conditions (discontinuously) between 28th October and the 2nd of December 2015. Initially the stripping for the new vehicle drop-off lane and turning point was monitored which was immediately followed by the excavation of foundations trenches for the new D&T Centre. The stripping of the new drop-off lane and turning point exposed man made horizons which covered the majority of the turning point, with the access road having been affected by heavy rooting activity. Having completed the supervision of the site stripping, only one definite archaeological feature was identified. The excavation of foundations trenches for the new D&T Centre identified three features; one possible ditch/gully terminus, a refuse pit and a large animal burial.
- 6.4 All layers encountered were inspected and recorded in section at 1:10 using standard single context recording methods. The recording systems adopted during the investigations were fully compatible with those widely used elsewhere in Berkshire, that is, those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual and presented in PCA's *Operations Manual 1* (Taylor 2009).
- 6.5 A full photographic record was made during the archaeological investigation, comprising digital photographs.
- 6.6 All levels were taken from a topographic survey (Midland survey Ltd, drawing no: 12773/6, June 2009).
- 6.7 The complete archive produced during the watching brief, comprising of written, drawn, photographic records and artefacts will be deposited at PCA's office in London and identified by site code BRBS15.
-

7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 New Access Road Layout

7.2 Phase 1: Natural Geological Deposits

7.2.1 The earliest deposit encountered during the watching brief was naturally formed silty sand [3] & [30] which was soft to friable in compaction with a mid brown orange colour, extensive rooting and peri-glacial features had created numerous pockets of light grey or yellow sand. The deposit had occasional sub angular to sub rounded stones throughout but was otherwise sterile. Only the upper portion of this layer was exposed during the excavation of the access road (**Plates 1, 2 3 and 9; Figure 5**)

7.2.2 The top of the silt sand layer [3], [30] was recorded at 57.92m OD at the south-east end of New Access Road site and dropping slightly to 57.81m OD at the north-west end.

7.3 Phase 2: Post-Medieval (1540 – 1900)

7.3.1 A sub oval pit [5] with a single fill [4] was noted towards the eastern end of the site. The fill was soft to friable in compaction with a light brown grey colour and had occasional small to medium sized sub angular to sub rounded stones. Finds recovered from the deposit included prehistoric struck flint and late post-medieval and abraded Roman ceramic building material (CBM) fragments. Two flints were recovered, both relatively unabraded; a retouched flake with significant cortex and a blade, both generally characteristic of the later prehistoric period (Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age) (F Meddens pers, comm.). Root action, which is prevalent within the trench area, could explain the wide date range of these finds. The feature measured 0.90m x 0.90m in width and had a depth of 0.20m with the uppermost height recorded at 58.52m OD (**Plates 3 & 4; Figure 4**).

7.4 Phase 3: 20th Century

7.4.1 Two sub oval pits [32] & [34] both containing single fills [31] and [33] respectively were noted towards the north-western end of site. The fills were both friable in compaction with a dark grey colour and had occasional small to medium sized sub angular to sub rounded stones. No finds were recovered from the deposit. Pit [32] measured 0.90m x 0.98m and had a depth of 0.45m with the uppermost height recorded at 57.81m OD. The smaller of the two features, pit [34], measured 0.60m x 0.35m and had a depth of 0.10m. The uppermost height was also recorded at 57.81m OD (**Plates 3 & 4; Figure 5**).

7.4.2 The sandy silts were sealed by subsoil deposits [2] & [29] formed of friable mid-brown clayey silty sand with inclusions of small CBM fragments and chalk and charcoal flecks. It ranged in thickness from 0.17m to 0.28m with the uppermost height recorded at 57.82m OD. The CBM inclusions imply a post-medieval date for the layer (**Plates 5, 6, 8 & 11; Figure 5**).

7.4.3 The subsoil was sealed by both topsoil [1] and made ground material [+] relating to the development of the school constructed in the 1960s and recently demolished. The uppermost

height for the topsoil recorded at 58.06m OD.

7.5 Test Pits 1, 2 & 3

7.6 Phase 1: Natural Geological Deposits

7.6.1 The earliest deposit encountered during the watching brief was naturally formed clay [11] & [14]. The deposit was firmly compacted and mid to light yellow brown in colour. It contained very occasional small sub-angular to sub-rounded stones throughout, but was otherwise sterile. Only the upper portion of this layer was exposed during the excavation of Test Pits 2 & 3, which were located at the eastern perimeter of the New D & T Centre, and it was seen to measure between 0.30m and 1.00m in thickness, the uppermost height recorded at 55.81m OD. The deposit was not observed at any other point across the site due to the shallower excavation depth of the ground works. (**Plates 13 and 14; Figure 6**).

7.6.2 The clay layer was sealed by a natural sandy gravel layer [10] and [13], which was firmly compacted and was mid to light orange yellow in colour. It was recorded at heights of between 56.31m OD and 56.51 OD. The excavation of all three test pits exposed this layer.

7.7 Phase 2: Post-Medieval (1540 – 1900)

7.7.1 No post-medieval horizon was noted during the excavation of the test pits.

7.8 New Design and Technology building foundation footings

7.9 Phase 1: Natural Geological Deposits

7.9.1 The earliest deposit encountered during the watching brief during the construction of the new D&T Centre was naturally formed sandy gravel layer [21], firm in compaction and mid to light yellow brown in colour. The deposit had very occasional gravel throughout but was otherwise sterile. Only the upper portion of this layer was exposed during the excavation of the footings and was seen to measure between 0.10m and 0.60m in thickness, the uppermost height recorded at 56.80m OD (**Plates 16, 18 and 21-24; Figures 7**).

7.9.2 The sandy gravel layer [21] was sealed by silt sand layer [20] which was soft to friable in compaction with a mid brown orange colour. Extensive rooting had created numerous pockets of light grey sand. The deposit had occasional amounts sub angular to sub rounded stones throughout but was otherwise sterile. Only the upper portion of this layer was exposed during the excavation and was recorded at 57.30m OD.

7.10 Phase 2: Post-Medieval (1540 – 1900)

7.10.1 Three post-medieval features were recorded during the excavation of the D&T Centre. A narrow possible ditch/gully terminus [18] was recorded running southwards towards the stable building. This contained only one fill [17] which contained very late post-medieval/ modern CBM fragments,

as so little of this feature was uncovered it was difficult to determine its exact purpose. The ditch/gully measured 0.35m x 0.50m and had a depth of 0.32m with the uppermost height recorded at 57.60m OD (**Plate 17; Figures 3 & 7**).

7.10.2 A large refuse pit [24] located towards the western side of site contained two fills, [22] & [24]. Both fills were friable in compaction with a dark grey colour. The lower of the two, [23], had slightly more greenish brown hue and had occasional small to medium sized sub angular to sub rounded stones. The upper most fill [22] contained retrievable and datable finds which comprised of late post-medieval pottery, glass, painted plaster and slate fragments (not kept). The pit measured 2.50m x 0.50m . The feature was excavated to a depth of 1.10m with the uppermost height recorded at 57.20m OD (**Plates 18 & 19; Figures 3 & 7**).

7.10.3 The third feature to be noted was a purposely dug pit [27] containing a horse burial [26], which was located towards the eastern end of site. One undiagnostic clay pipe stem fragment was also retrieved from the fill [25]. The pit measured of 1.80m in length and 0.44m in depth, the width extended beyond the excavation area, with the uppermost height recorded at 56.83m OD (**Plate 20; Figures 3 & 7**).

7.10.4 Part of an articulated dog skeleton [28] was also uncovered at the very eastern end of site, but almost all of the burial had been truncated by modern services, leaving only remnants of the legs and feet (**Figure 5**).

7.11 Phase 3: 20th Century

7.11.1 The sandy silts were sealed by subsoil deposits [16] & [19] formed of friable mid-brown clayey silty sand with inclusions of small CBM fragments and chalk and charcoal flecks. It ranged in thickness from 0.20m to 0.30m with the uppermost height recorded at 57.94m OD. The CBM inclusions imply a post-medieval date for the layer (**Plates 17; Figure 7**).

7.11.2 The subsoil was sealed by both topsoil [15] and made ground material [+] relating to the development of the school constructed in the 1960s and recently demolished. The uppermost height for the topsoil recorded at 58.10m OD.

7.12 Phase 3: 20th Century

7.12.1 The subsoil was sealed by both topsoil [1] and made ground material [3] relating to the development of the school buildings constructed in the 1960s and recently demolished.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The watching brief recorded natural sands and silts sealed by localised subsoil and topsoil across the site. Four features with finds ranging in date from the prehistoric to modern were obtained during the watching brief.

8.2 New Access Road Layout

8.2.1 The plot of land investigated as part of the new road scheme layout originally formed part of the estate park from the medieval period to the present day. Thus the land was situated on the fringes of the main areas of settlement and agricultural processing. This could explain the low occurrence of archaeological evidence, as only one small pit feature, located towards the main entrance to the school, was identified. It contained a mixture of datable finds, including prehistoric struck flint fragments and a few modern CBM fragments and a single abraded fragment of Roman CBM. Prehistoric struck flint was also retrieved from the subsoil layer during the initial stripping of the site. The change of use from a private house to a school in the 20th century introduced the need for extra pipe and service runs, drains and inspection pits which obscured about a quarter of the ground surface where modern building debris was revealed during excavation.

8.3 New Design and Technology building foundation footings

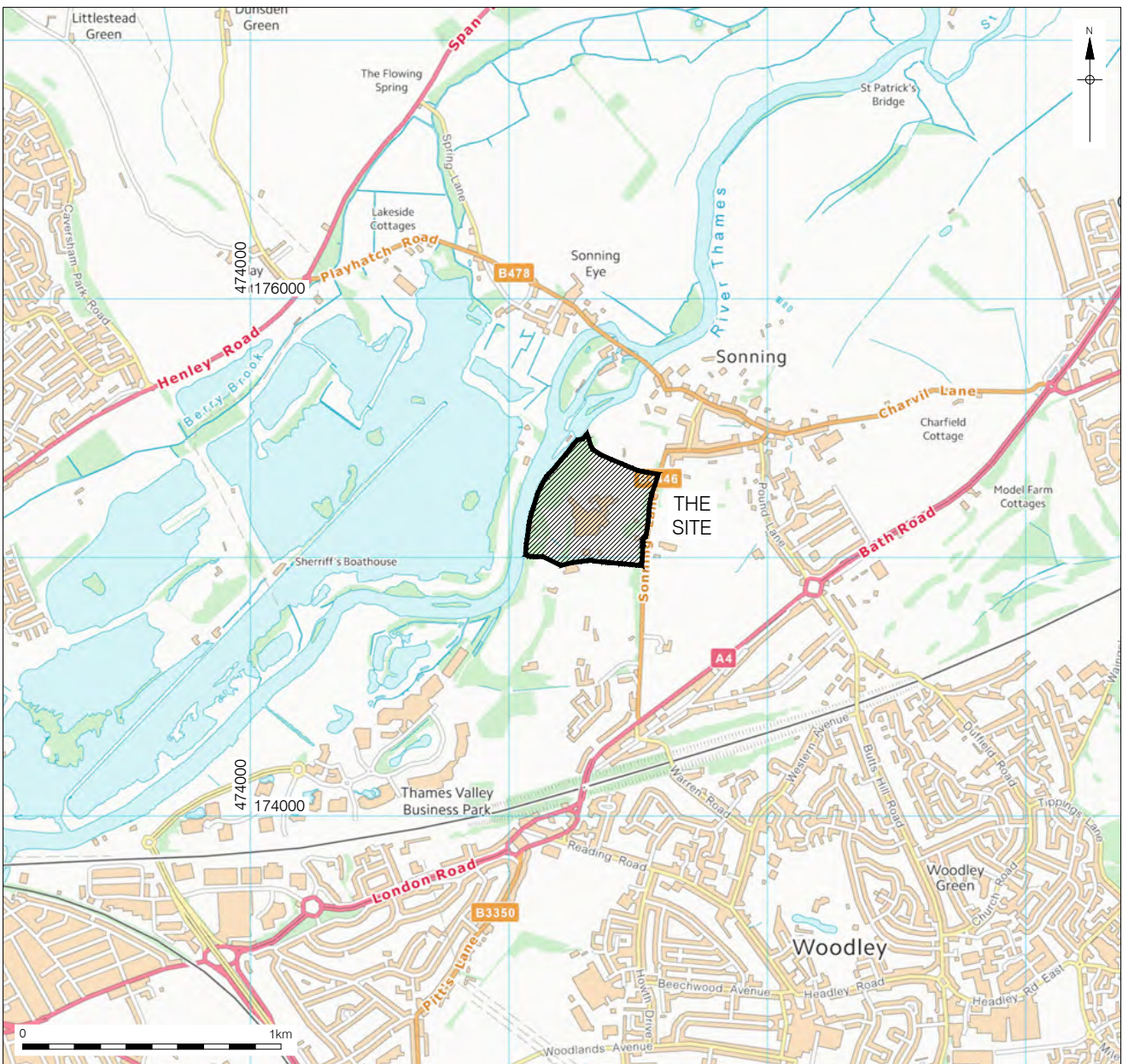
8.3.1 The plot of land investigated as part of the new D&T Centre was located eastwards of the main manor house and immediately north of the former stable building. Three features were identified: A narrow possible ditch/gully terminus which ran southwards towards the stable building and contained very late post-medieval/ modern CBM fragments. As so little of this feature was uncovered it was difficult to determine its exact purpose. A large refuse pit located towards the western side of side of site contained late post-medieval pottery, glass, painted plaster and slate fragments (not kept). Given the amount of slate and painted plaster noted within the pit fill, it is likely that the pit was associated with an episode of demolition or refurbishment of either the main manor house or other outbuildings (pit not bottomed only uppermost layer recorded, so could be earlier feature). Lastly, part of a horse placed within a deliberate burial cut was uncovered towards the eastern end of site. One undiagnostic clay pipe stem fragment was also retrieved from the feature, and given its proximity to the stable block, this is likely to represent local disposal. Part of an articulated dog skeleton was also uncovered at the very eastern end of site, but almost all of the burial had been truncated away by modern services, leaving only remnants of the legs and feet. 20th century pipe and service runs, drains and modern building debris had truncated away the north western quarter of site.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Huntley Cartwright and Reading Bluecoat School for commissioning the work. We would also like to thank Ellie Leary for monitoring the project on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.
- 9.2 The project was managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology by Tim Bradley. Both the archaeological watching brief was carried out and written by Kari Bower. and the illustrations were prepared by Hayley Baxter.

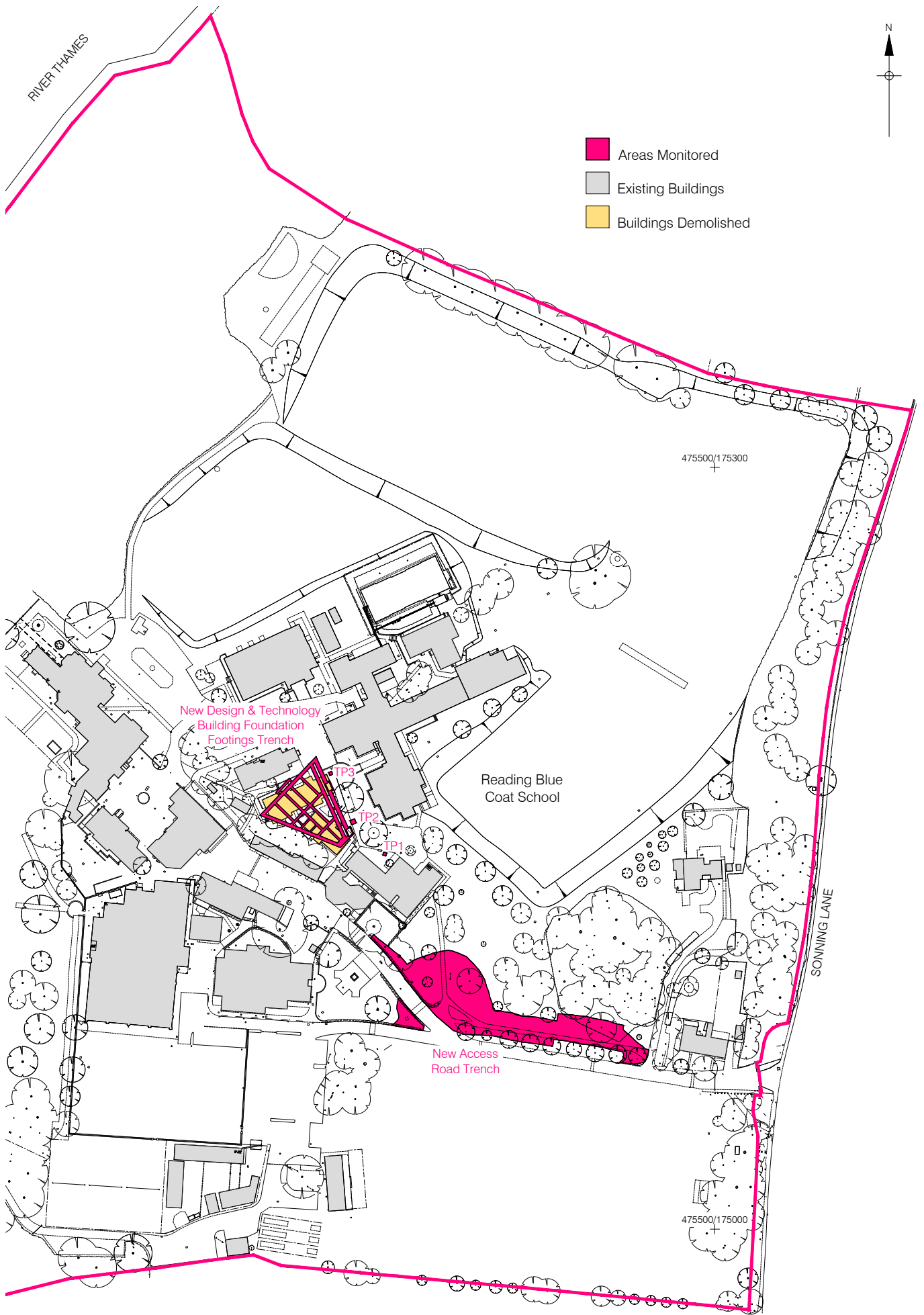
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- Taylor, J. with Brown, G. 2009, *Fieldwork Induction Manual: Operations Manual 1*, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.



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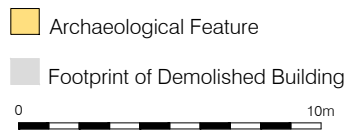
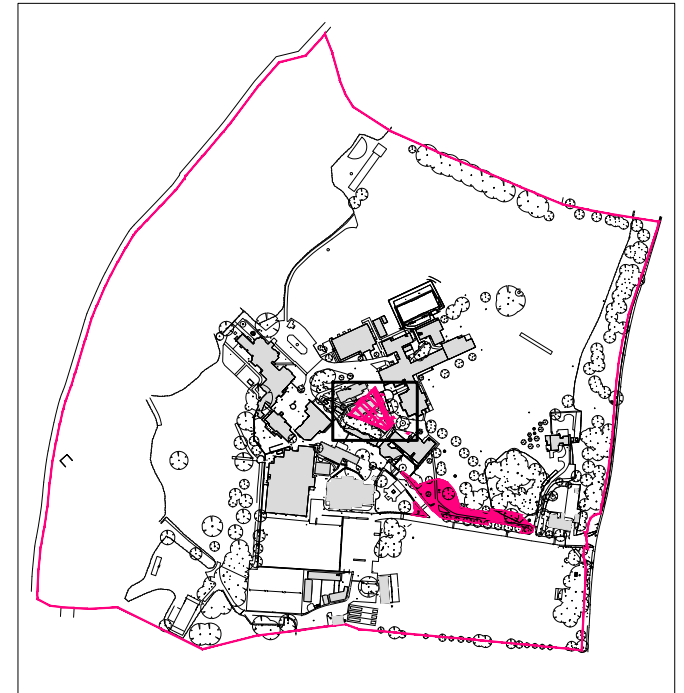
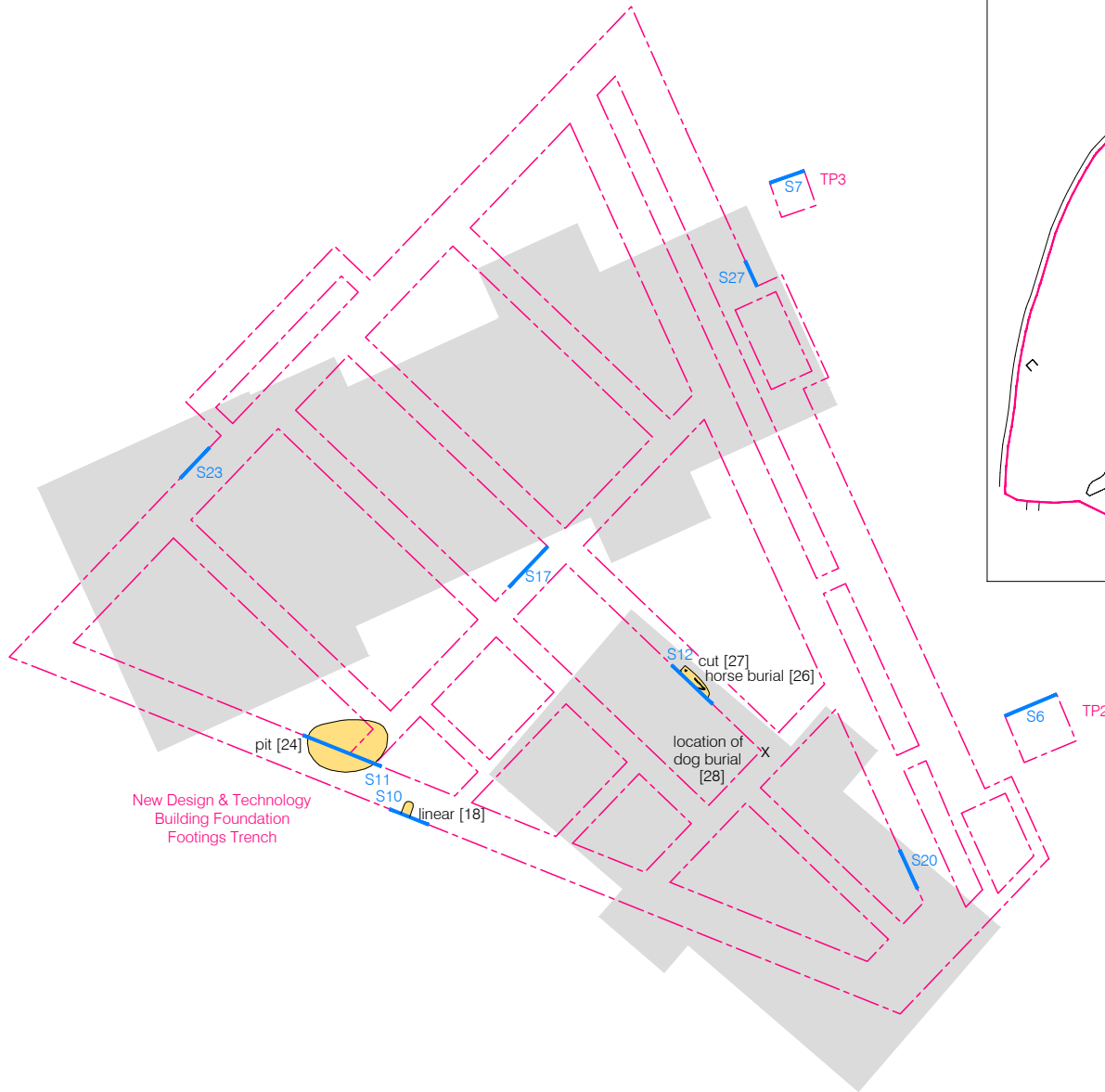
Figure 1
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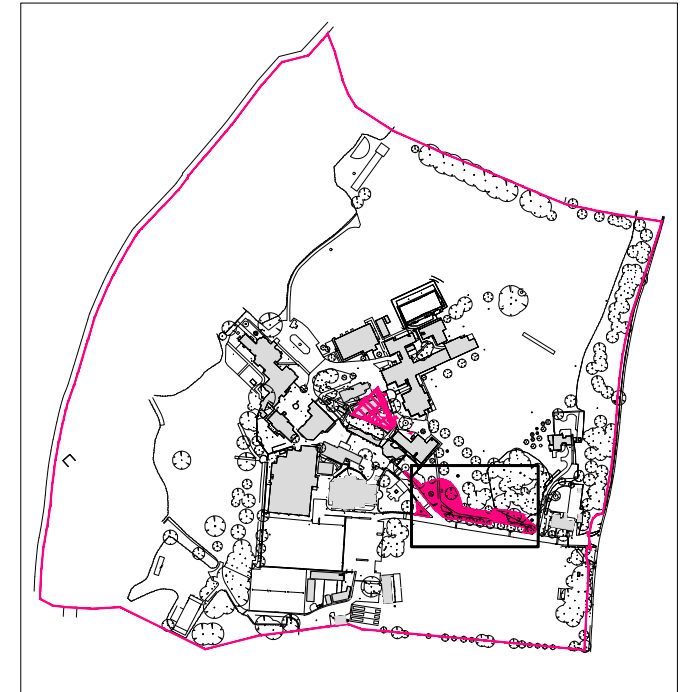
Based on drawing 12773 supplied by Midland Survey Ltd, 2015
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Figure 2
 Monitored Areas of Watching Brief
 1:2,000 at A4



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Figure 3
Plan of New Design & Technology Building Foundation
Footings Trench and Test pits 1-3
1:250 at A4



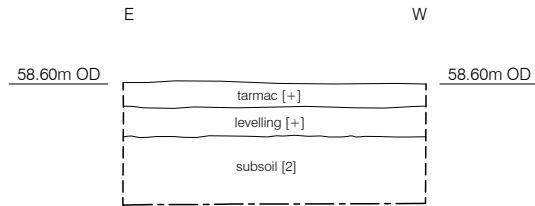
Archaeological Feature

Excavated

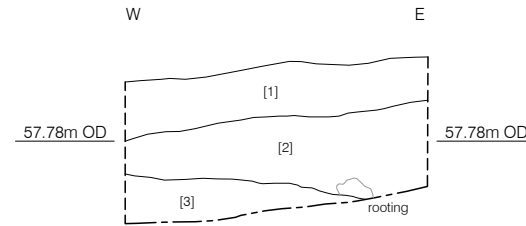


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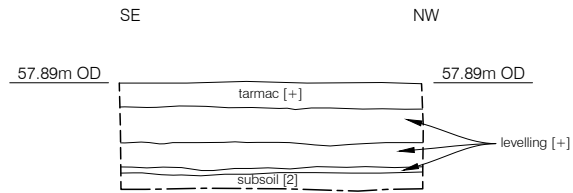
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Plan of New Access Road Trench
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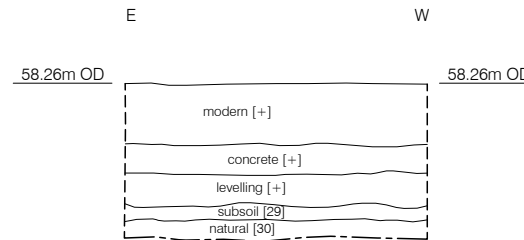
Section 3
North facing
New Access Road Trench



Section 4
South facing
New Access Road Trench



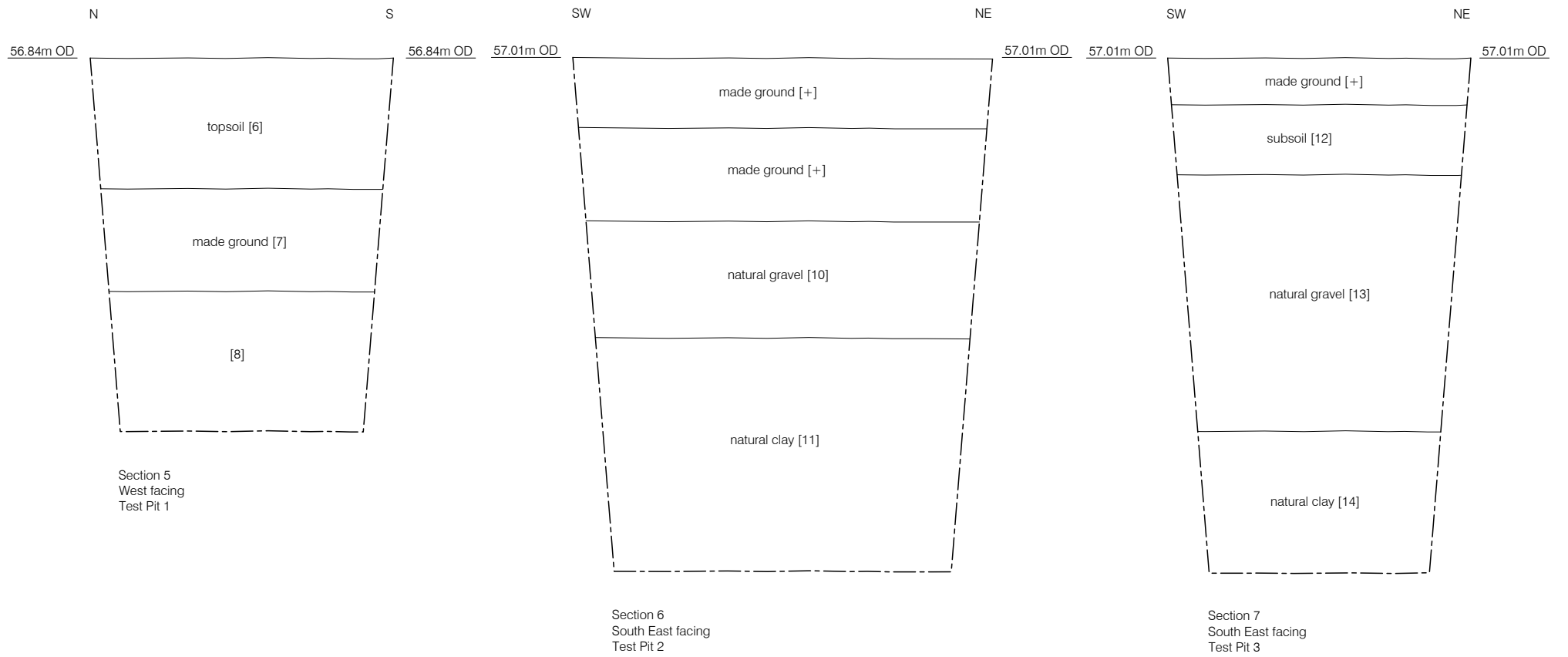
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North East facing
New Access Road Trench

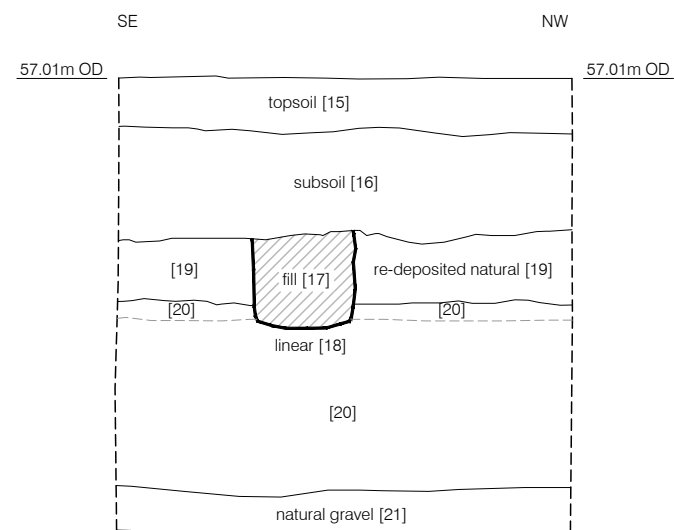


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North facing
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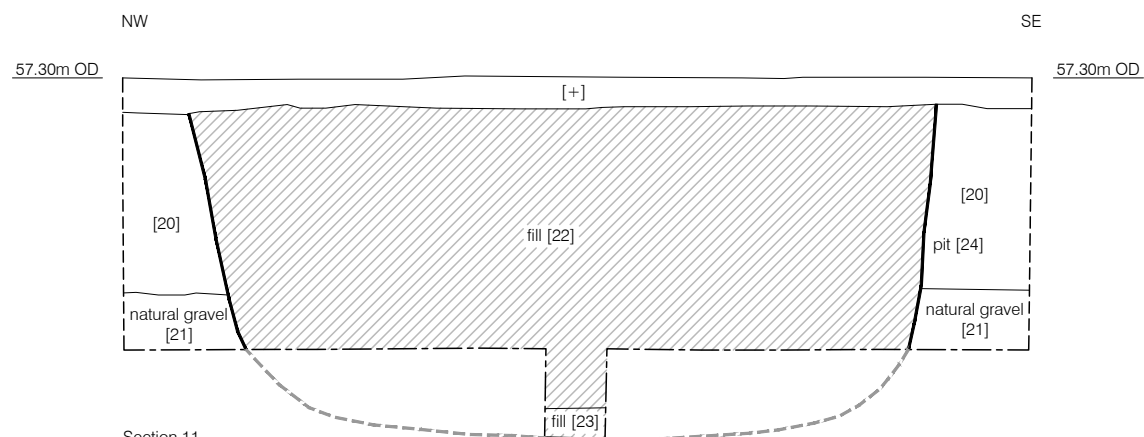


Figure 5
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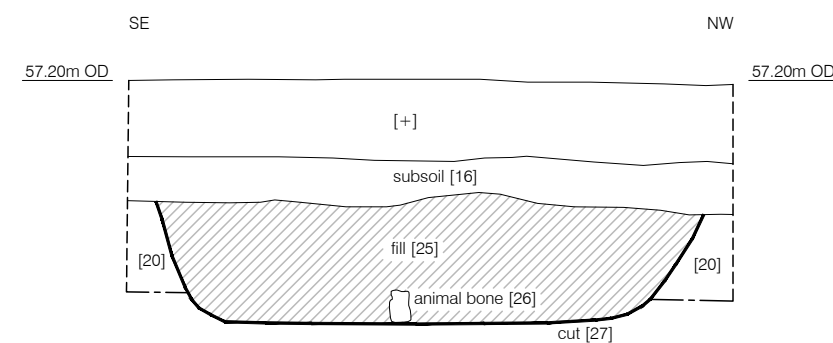




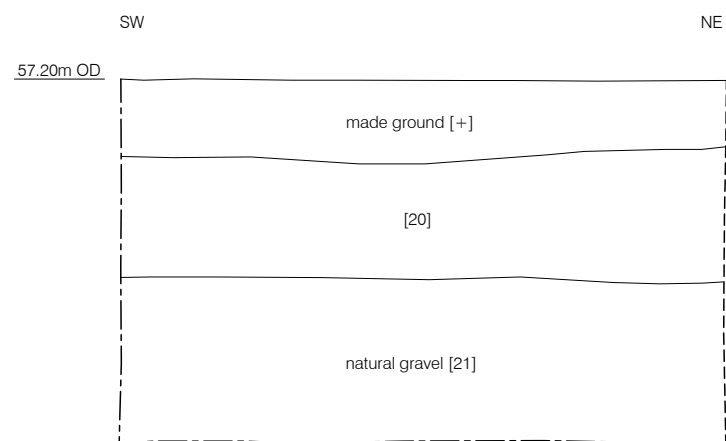
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North East facing
Footings Trench for New D&T Building



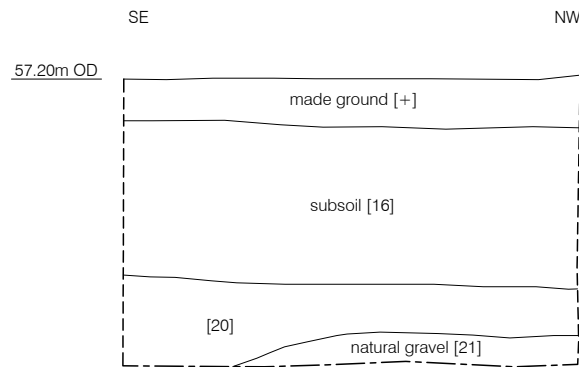
Section 11
South West facing
Footings Trench for New D&T Building



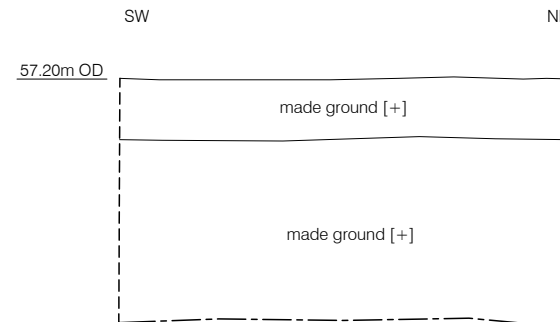
Section 12
North East facing
Footings Trench for New D&T Building



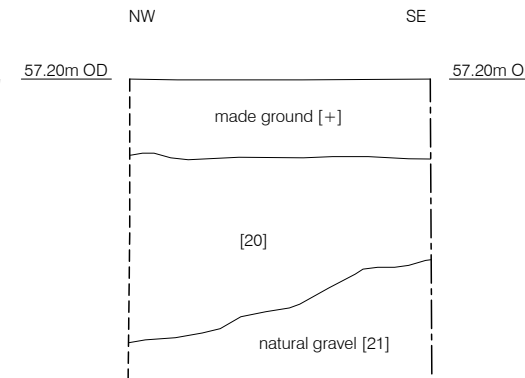
Section 17
South East facing
Footings Trench for New D&T Building



Section 20
North East facing
Footings Trench for New D&T Building



Section 23
South East facing
Footings Trench for New D&T Building



Section 27
South West facing
Footings Trench for New D&T Building

PLATES



Plate 1: General shot showing machine stripping of Access Road Trench at eastern extent, looking north-east (BRBS15 D1 (24))



Plate 2: General shot showing machine stripping of turning point in new access road trench towards north-west extent, looking north-west (BRBS15 D1 (11))



Plate 3: Location of Pit [5] in relation to overall Access Road Trench, looking east (BRBS15 D1 (22))



Plate 4: Pit [5], in Access Road Trench, looking south (BRBS15 D1 (20))



Plate 5: Sample section 3 in Access Road Trench, looking south (BRBS15 D1 (27))



Plate 6: Sample section 4 in Access Road Trench, looking south (BRBS15 D1 (28))



Plate 7: General shot of Access Road Trench at north-western extent, looking north-west (BRBS15 D1 (52))



Plate 8: Sample section 9 in Access Road Trench, looking south-west (BRBS15 D1 (50))



*Plate 9: General shot of Access Road Trench at south-western extent, looking north-west (BRBS15
D2 (32))*



*Plate 10: Pits [32] and [34] in south-western extent of Access Road Trench, looking east (BRBS15
D2 (33))*



Plate 11: Sample section 28 in Access Road Trench, looking south south-west (BRBS15 2 (41))



Plate 12: Test pit 1, looking south-east (BRBS15 D1 (39))



Plate 13: Test pit 2, looking north north-west (BRBS15 D1 (41))



Plate 14: Test pit 3, looking north-west (BRBS15 D1 (45))



*Plate 15: General site shot prior to excavation of D& T Footings Trench at north end, looking south
(BRBS15 D1 (34))*



*Plate 16: General shot showing excavation of D& T Footings Trench at south-west end, looking
north-east (BRBS15 D1 (75))*



Plate 17: General shot showing excavation of D& T Footings Trench at NE end, looking north north-east (BRBS15 D2 (29))



Plate 18: Section 10 showing linear [18], in D& T footings Trench, looking south (BRBS15 D1 (66))



Plate 19: Oblique shot of section 11- Post-med refuse pit [24] (south side), in D& T footings trench, looking north north-west (BRBS15 D1 (63))



Plate 20: Shot showing post-med refuse pit [24] (north side) and modern truncation towards north-west end of D& T footings trench, looking south-west (BRBS15 D1 (73))



Plate 21: Articulated horse burial [27] as noted in section 12, in D & T footings trench, looking south-west (BRBS15 D1 (81))



Plate 21: Sample section 17, in D & T footings trench, looking north-west (BRBS15 D2 (5))



Plate 22: Sample section 20, in D & T footings trench, looking west (BRBS15 D2 (8))



Plate 23: Sample section 23, in D & T footings trench, looking north-west (BRBS15 D2 (14))



Plate 24: Sample section 27, in D& T footings trench, looking north-east (BRBS15 D2 (45))

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX AND SITE MATRIX

Site Code	Context No.	Plan	Section	Type	Description	Phase
BRBS15	1	Access Road	1, 4, 8, 9	Layer	Top Soil	3
BRBS15	2	Access Road	2, 4, 8, 9	Layer	Subsoil	3
BRBS15	3	Access Road	4	Layer	Natural sandy silt	1
BRBS15	4	Access Road	2	Deposit	Fill of cut [5]	3
BRBS15	5	Access Road	2	Cut	Small sub-oval pit cut	3
BRBS15	6	TP1	5	Layer	Topsoil	3
BRBS15	7	TP1	5	Layer	Modern made ground	3
BRBS15	8	TP1	5	Layer	Natural gravel	3
BRBS15	9	TP2	6	Layer	Modern made ground	1
BRBS15	10	TP2	6	Layer	Natural gravel	1
BRBS15	11	TP2	6	Layer	Natural clay	1
BRBS15	12	TP3	7	Layer	Subsoil	
BRBS15	13	TP3	7	Layer	Natural gravel	1
BRBS15	14	TP3	7	Layer	Natural clay	1
BRBS15	15	D & T Centre	10	Layer	Topsoil	3
BRBS15	16	D & T Centre	10, 12	Layer	Subsoil	3
BRBS15	17	D & T Centre	10	Deposit	Fill of cut [18]	3
BRBS15	18	D & T Centre	10	Cut	Cut of ditch terminus	3
BRBS15	19	D & T Centre	10	Layer	Re-deposited sandy silt	3
BRBS15	20	D & T Centre	10	Layer	Natural sandy silt	1
BRBS15	21	D & T Centre	10	Layer	Natural gravel	1
BRBS15	22	D & T Centre	11	Deposit	Uppermost fill of cut [24] above [23]	3
BRBS15	23	D & T Centre	11	Deposit	Fill of cut [24] below [22]	3
BRBS15	24	D & T Centre	11	Cut	Cut of large oval refuse pit cut	3
BRBS15	25	D & T Centre	12	Deposit	Fill of cut [27]	3
BRBS15	26	D & T Centre	12	Skeleton	Articulated animal skeleton	3
BRBS15	27	D & T Centre	12	Cut	Cut containing fill [25] & skeleton [26]	3
BRBS15	28	D & T Centre	-	Skeleton	Articulated animal skeleton	3
BRBS15	29	Access Road	28	Layer	Subsoil	3
BRBS15	30	Access Road	28	Layer	Natural sandy silt	1
BRBS15	31	Access Road	-	Deposit	Fill of cut [32]	3
BRBS15	32	Access	-	Cut	Small sub-oval pit cut	3

Site Code	Context No.	Plan	Section	Type	Description	Phase
		Road				
BRBS15	33	Access Road	-	Deposit	Fill of cut [34]	3
BRBS15	34	Access Road	-	Cut	Small sub-oval pit cut	3

Phase 1: Natural Geology

Phase 2: PostMedieval (1540 – 1900)

Phase 3: Modern Mid-20th (1901- present)

APPENDIX 2: POTTERY & GLASS

By Chris Jarrett

Pottery

Introduction

A small sized assemblage of pottery was recovered from the site (one box). The pottery dates exclusively to the post-medieval period and more specifically the 19th century. The material consists of fragmentary items and two intact bottles. None of the pottery was abraded and was most likely to have been discarded soon after breakage. The pottery was quantified using sherd counts (SC), estimated number of vessels (ENV) and weight, measured in grams. Post-Roman pottery was recovered from a single context as a small (fewer than 30 sherds) sized group.

All of the pottery (four sherds, 4 ENV and weighing 1.470kg, of which none was unstratified) was examined macroscopically and microscopically using a binocular microscope (x20), and recorded in a database format, by fabric, form and decoration. The classification of the pottery types is according to the Museum of London Archaeology (2014). The pottery is discussed as a spot dating index.

Spot dating index

Context [22], spot date: mid-late 19th century

- Bone china with under-glaze painted decoration (BONE PNTD), 1794–1900, one sherd, 1 MNV, 39g. Dinner plate: rim sherd with moulded scrolls and floral sprays and painted with a small polychrome discrete rose or peony. Late 19th century
- English brown salt-glazed stoneware (ENGS), 1700–1900, two sherds, 2 MNV, 1.346kg.
- Blacking bottles: two intact tall examples with a rim diameter of 80mm and a height of 192mm. Derbyshire source, e.g. Bourne, Denby. 19th-early 20th century
- Refined whiteware with under-glaze transfer-printed decoration (TPW), 1780–1900, one sherd, 1 MNV, 65g. Rim sherd/deep spout of a large jug or pitcher with a European landscape design. c. 1835–45 or later.

Significance and potential for the assemblage and recommendations for further work

The pottery has little significance at a local level as it occurs as a very small group. The Ceramic profile of the group is a national one as it consists of pottery types marketed throughout Britain during the 19th and 20th centuries. The pottery only has the potential to date the context it was recovered from. There are no recommendations for further work on the assemblage.

Reference

Museum of London Archaeology 2014, 'Medieval and post-medieval pottery codes'.
<http://www.mola.org.uk/resources/medieval-and-post-medieval-pottery-codes>. Accessed
November 2015.

Glass

Introduction

Glass was recovered from a single context: [22]. The glass consists of two fragments (229g) from the base of an English cylindrical wine bottle with a wide topped, deep conical kick. The vessel was made in a dark olive green soda-type glass, which has slightly weathered. It was probably made in a two-piece mould and so dates the item from c. 1810 onwards.

The glass has no significance at a local level and 19th-century wine bottles are a common place archaeological find. The item only has the potential to date the context it was recovered from.

There are no recommendations for further work on the vessel.

APPENDIX 3: ANIMAL BONE

By Karen Deighton

A moderate amount of animal bones were recovered from three contexts during the course of excavation.

This material was examined to establish the taxa present, level of preservation and to inform upon the potential for further work and any future collection strategies should subsequent excavation take place.

Method

Bones were identified, where possible, to taxa with the aid of a bone atlas (Schmid 1972). The presence of ageing data (i.e. status of epiphyseal fusion (Silver 1969)) was noted. The state of preservation was also noted.

Description of assemblage

Context [2] produced two cattle sized fragments of bone only - undated.

Animal bone from context [26] consisted of the lower fore and hind limbs of a juvenile horse. The bones appeared to belong to the same animal which was of large stature. The large size of the animal is consistent with the post medieval date for pottery from the site, as the post medieval period witnessed improvements to livestock through selective breeding and improved foddering. Animal bone from context [28] consists of a partial skeleton of a large adult dog.

Both the horse and the dog remains were well preservation with little fragmentation and moderate surface abrasion. No evidence for butchery or canid gnawing was observed. The high level of preservation, lack of skinning or butchery evidence and the fact the assemblage consists largely of partial skeletons could suggest that carcasses were dumped or buried whole.

Potential and significance

The potential of the assemblage is low. Other than to state dog, horse and cattle were associated with the site, the bones they give little indication as to the function, economy or status of the site. The finds are of little significance locally or regionally as finds of horse and dog carcass are fairly common at late post medieval sites. No further work is recommended.

References

Schmid, E 1972 Atlas of animal bones London: Elsevier press

Silver, I. 1969 The ageing of domestic animals in D. Brothwell and E. Higgs (eds)

Context	Cut	Taxa	Element	comments
2		cattle size	long bone	
2		cattle size	indeterminate	

Context	Cut	Taxa	Element	comments
26		horse	left tibia	
26		horse	right tibia	
26		horse	patella	
26		horse	left metatarsal	
26		horse	right metatarsal	
26		horse	right navicular tarsal	
26		horse	left navicular tarsal	
26		horse	right cuboid	
26		horse	left cuboid	
26		horse	Phalange 1	3 bones
26		horse	phalange 2	2 bones
26		horse	leftdistal humerus	
26		horse	right distal humerus	
26		horse	right radius	
26		horse	left radius	
26		horse	right ulna	
26		horse	left ulna	
26		horse	right magnus	
26		horse	left magnus	
26		horse	right scaphoid	
26		horse	left schphoid	
26		horse	right lunar	
26		horse	left lunar	
28		dog	femur	
28		dog	left tibia	
28		dog	right tibia	
28		dog	left fibula	
28		dog	right fibula	
28		dog	calcaneum	
28		dog	metatarsal 1	
28		dog	metatarsal 2	
28		dog	metatarsal3	
28		dog	metatarsal 4	
28		dog	proximal radius	
28		dog	phalange 1	

APPENDIX 4: BUILDING MATERIAL

By Kevin Hayward - Amparo Valcarcel

Context	Fabric	Form	Size	Date range of material		Latest dated material		Spot date	Spot date with mortar
2	2273;2271	Medieval and post medieval peg tiles	2	1200	1800	1200	1800	1200-1600+	No mortar
4	Probably local silty fabric from Reading or Bracklesham Beds	Roman Abraded tile	1	50	400	50	400	50-400	No mortar
17	Similar London fabric 3039	Local later post medieval red bricks fragments	4	1700	1900	1700	1900	1700-1900	No mortar
22	3100M or 3100PM	Plain wall plaster	1	1400	1900	1400	1900	1600-1900	No mortar

Review

The assemblage (8 fragments, 0.294 kg) consists mainly of small pieces of fragmentary and abraded Roman, medieval and post medieval ceramic building material (bricks; peg tiles). These are made probably by local fabrics from Reading or Bracklesham Beds. All the pieces are abraded.

Recommendations

The value of this small assemblage lies simply in dating the sequence. The fragment of Roman tile provides further proof of Roman activity along this stretch of the River Thames. No further work recommended.

APPENDIX 5: OASIS DATA FORM

Project details

Project name	Phases 1 and 2 at Reading Blue Coat School, Holme Park, Sonning Lane, Sonning, Berkshire
Short description of the project	The groundworks required for a new access road entailed the excavation of a strip of land adjacent to the present road. The works required for the new Design and Technology Centre entailed the demolition of two separate buildings and the excavation of foundation trenches for the footings of one single building. Six features with finds ranging in date from the prehistoric to modern were observed from both the new vehicle drop off lane and turning point site and new Design and Technology Centre. A quarter of the new access road and turning point site had been heavily truncated by modern services with the remaining three quarters affected by heavy rooting. Numerous natural depressions and rooting boles were investigated, from which only one archaeological feature was noted. The foundations and landscaping associated with the two former buildings within the location of the Design and Technology Centre had caused heavy truncation in the north-west end of the site. However one possible ditch/gully terminus, a large refuse pit, a horse burial and the remnants of a dog burial were observed within the southern side of site. All the features are thought to be late post-medieval in date.
Project dates	Start: 28-10-2015 End: 02-12-2016
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	FLINT Late Bronze Age
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BUILDING MATERIAL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BUILDING MATERIAL Roman
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Post Medieval

Project location

Country	England
Site location	BERKSHIRE WOKINGHAM SONNING Reading Blue Coat School, Holme Park, Sonning Lane, Sonning, Berkshire
Postcode	RG4 6SU
Study area	3000 Square metres

Site coordinates SU 75327 75088 51.469250442346 -0.915406708981 51 28 09 N 000 54 55 W
Point

Height OD / Min: 57.3m Max: 57.92m
Depth

Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project brief originator Berkshire Archaeology

Project design originator Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project director/manager Tim Bradley

Project supervisor Kari Bower

Type of sponsor/funding body School

Name of sponsor/funding body Reading Blue Coat School

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Recipient to be confirmed

Physical Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Archive recipient Recipient to be confirmed

Digital Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics"

Digital Media available "Spreadsheets","Text"

Paper Archive recipient Recipient to be confirmed

Paper Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Matrices","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Unpublished"

Text"

Entered by Tim Bradley (tbradley@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 4 January 2016

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