



Archway Heritage

Archaeological watching brief

of test pit excavation

at

The Red
Lion, Theale

for

Mr Eric Benjamin



Report Reference: AH_RL-143_TT Report-Final.doc



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**Archway Heritage
24 Addison Road
Reading RG1 8EN**

0044 7716 917152

**Author: Mary Neale
mary@archwayheritage.co.uk**



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Summary

A watching brief of the mechanical excavation of four test pits recorded the sequence of deposits to the rear of The Red Lion, 5 Church Street, Theale, Reading.

A feature was encountered in Test Pit 1. It was spot dated by a sherd of pot as Post-medieval and is interpreted as a former boundary ditch.

There was evidence of extensive disturbance in Test Pit 2, which was caused by tree roots, an adjacent tank and demolished outbuildings. There was no evidence of archaeological features or deposits or finds.

A number of finds were recovered from Test Pit 3. It contained no archaeological features or deposits but was long enough to allow for the interpretation of a sequence of deposits that was found to be representative across the rest of the test pits. The sequence on Site is:

- hardcore;
- tarmac with underlying hardcore bedding;
- buried topsoil;
- buried subsoil; and
- alluvium, the natural.

Test Pit 4 contained no archaeological features or deposits.



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 In accordance with the NPPF (2018), a watching brief has been undertaken in order to inform of any archaeology findings, in accordance with the planning permission granted (16/00853/FULD APP/W0340/W/16/3160633). The Archaeological Officer has advised that an archaeological watching brief on the mechanical excavation of test pits be undertaken, in lieu of a watching brief of the excavation of foundations and other ground works. A report on the results of the watching brief and an archive form part of the requirements to complete this work. Having undertaken discussions with West Berkshire Museum and Sarah Orr, Senior Archaeologist (Planning & Management Advice), the results of the fieldwork negate any need for archive deposition.
- 1.1.2 This document sets out details of the results of an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of test pits on land at The Red Lion, 5 Church Street, Theale, Reading RG7 5BU in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014). No brief has been issued and this document is based upon a recommendation by Mr Alex Godden, Archaeological Officer at West Berkshire Archaeology Service.

1.2 Instruction

- 1.2.1 The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr Eric Benjamin, the landowner. The watching brief on the excavation of test pits was undertaken by Mary Neale, Archway Heritage, on the 17th August 2018. The weather was dry and sunny.

1.3 Standards

- 1.3.1 This report has been written by Mary Neale. Mary is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and subscribes to that organisation's Code of Conduct. All relevant CIfA Codes of Practice were adhered to throughout the course of the project. The watching brief on the excavation of test pits was undertaken as per a revised and approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), in accordance with good professional practice.

1.4 Site location and description

- 1.4.1 The Site is located to the rear of The Red Lion, 5 Church Street, Theale, Reading RG7 5BU; NGR: SU 64167 71244, within Theale Village in West Berkshire, opposite the junction between Englefield Road and Church Street (see Figure 1). It is approximately 850m² in extent and 49.18m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The Site slopes down about a metre



from the street frontage to the rear boundary.

- 1.4.2 At the time of the watching brief, the surface of the former landscaping to the rear of the Site had been removed, the former outbuildings were demolished and hardcore laid on top of soft ground and tarmac. Where possible levels were taken from the top of the tarmac or below the level of the newly laid rubble to ensure levels were accurate.



2 Historical and archaeological background

2.1 Historical background

2.1.1 Alex Godden provided a summary of the archaeological potential of the Site in his response to the planning application - *"The proposed development is within the historic settlement core of Theale and adjacent to a road that is likely to have Medieval origins. As such, there is some potential for archaeological deposits related to Medieval or later settlement within the development area, which could potentially be disturbed through groundworks on the site."* Research by Theale History Group (Colony Architects 2014) suggests The Red Lion dates from 1845 and, therefore, may have been one of the late coaching inns providing rest and refreshment to travellers along the main road between Bath and Reading.

2.1.2 The Red Lion is not listed but as a mid 19th century building has historic interest and is located adjacent to Grade II listed buildings of 18th century date, Numbers 1 and 3 Church Street (List Entry Number 1215144). It is a two storey building with a backfilled cellar located by the bar and under the original staircase. The cellar was backfilled decades previously and is inaccessible. Two historic maps were viewed at the Berkshire Record Office dating from 1811-1817 and 1844 confirmed that The Red Lion had not been built and there are no structures illustrated within the Site at that time.

2.2 Archaeological background

2.2.1 A small number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken within 500m of the Site and have revealed variable levels of potential. For example, an archaeological evaluation at the Lamb Public House located two features, both of which contained 1st century AD Roman pottery, at the front of the plot and undated features to the rear. A subsequent watching brief yielded no further evidence. Another example, an archaeological evaluation at 39-45 Church Street, identified a peaty layer of insufficient quality for environmental sampling. Slag was also found and was interpreted as most likely to have been associated with the blacksmiths shop that was once located there.

2.3 Aims

2.3.1 The recording of all deposits, finds, ecofacts and features of archaeological interest in order to:

- assess the archaeological potential in accordance with the objectives in the WSI;
- prepare a report summarising the results of the work and the archaeological implications affected by the proposed development, and;
- prepare and submit a suitable archive to West Berkshire Museum or other



repository, if appropriate.

2.4 Methodology

- 2.4.1 Foundations were excavated without archaeological supervision and in consultation with the Council's Senior Archaeologist, Sarah Orr, regarding this matter, alternative investigatory works were proposed. The alternative method agreed was a watching brief and the excavation of five 2m x 2m test pits, located to allow an even spread to help gain an understanding of deposits across the Site. The Site Supervisor, Mary Neale, kept in contact with Ms Orr during the watching brief to discuss findings and aid decision making. On the day of the watching brief, it became evident that the layout of the Site had changed, there was limited space on the Site, and the locations of the test pits were repositioned as a result. Worker's vehicles were parked in the location of the test pit on the western boundary of the Site. There was no alternative parking on the roadside. As a result, it was agreed with Ms Orr to extend the test pit revealing the most promising evidence, Test Pit 3, instead of excavating the fifth test pit. Therefore, four test pits were excavated by a bladed bucket fitted to a mini-digger operating under close archaeological supervision (see Figure 2). The north- and south-facing sections in three test pits and the west-facing section of one of the test pits were straightened by hand and trowelled prior to recording. Spoil heaps were examined for finds.
- 2.4.2 Once each test pit was cleaned, a record of the stratigraphy was made through measured section drawings or measured sketches, as appropriate. A detailed record was made in test pits where features were located (see Appendix 6). A detailed record was also made of archaeological finds or deposits of interest. Environmental samples were not taken due to limited potential of the deposits. This decision was made in consultation with the Council's Senior Archaeologist, Ms Orr.

On-site Recording

- 2.4.3 All deposits were recorded according to correct principles of stratigraphic excavation on Archway Heritage's pro forma context sheets, which are compatible with industry standard recording systems.

Photographic Record

- 2.4.4 The photographic record comprised a series of high-resolution digital images. A digital photograph of the trowelled and recorded test pit sections are included with the report.

Finds

- 2.4.5 Artefacts were used for spot dating and finds were bagged, noting the test pit and the context in which they were found.



3 Results

3.1 Test Pit 1

- 3.1.1 A feature was identified below the buried subsoil and spot dated by a sherd of pot as Post-medieval in date. The full width of the feature was not revealed because it was not possible to extend the test pit to the west due to the fence and services in the immediate vicinity. In addition, it was not possible to extend the test pit to the east due to need for the digger to be able to manoeuvre within this confined space (scaffolding added to dangers and restricted space). The edges of the test pit were stepped out to ensure rubble would not fall into the test pit while the Site Supervisor was cleaning the sections. The use of a ladder allowed safe access for hand cleaning and recording.
- 3.1.2 Overlaying early historic maps and Ordnance Survey maps confirmed that a diagonal ditch was once located in the same spot as the test pit, which was illustrated on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map. It was the former property boundary for the Red Lion, which was realigned to be perpendicular to the road, as illustrated on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map (see Figure 3).

Table 1: Summary of results from Test Pit 1

Test Pit	1	Figure	4	Plate	1
Ground Level (m OD): 48.44			Level of Natural (m OD): 47.14		
Total depth 1.7m					
Size		2m x 2m			
Deposit				Context No.	Average Depth (m)
Made ground - loose mixture of stone, brick and soil				(101)	0.90m
Buried topsoil - crumbly mottled dark brown sandy clay, freq. small stones				(102)	0.26m
Buried subsoil - friable dark grey-brown clay-sand, small stones				(103)	0.45m
Fill - pliable light-grey brown sandy clay, occasional stones and iron pan				(104)	0.53m
Cut - sharp break of slope (top), gradual break of slope (base), rounded base				[105]	N/A
Alluvium - firm mid-grey clay, occasional chalk flecks				(106)	0.13m+
Summary					
A feature was encountered in Test Pit 1. It was spot dated by a sherd of pot as Post-medieval and is interpreted as a former boundary ditch.					



3.2 Test Pit 2

3.2.1 This test pit was excavated down to a depth of 0.60m. It became apparent that all sides of the test pit were showing disturbance in the wider area and having discussed this with the landowner, Mr Eric Benjamin, the disturbances were identified as caused by a tank to the west, demolished outbuildings to the north and east and roots from a boundary tree to the south. Further excavation was stopped at that stage, it was important not to disturb the tank. The edges of the test pit were stepped out to ensure rubble would not fall into the test pit while the Site Supervisor was cleaning the sections. The use of a ladder allowed safe access for hand cleaning and recording.

Table 2: Summary of results from Test Pit 2

Test Pit	2	Figure	5	Plate	2
Ground Level (m OD): 48.38m		Level of Natural (m OD): 47.72m			
Total depth 0.66m					
Size		1m x 1.2m			
Deposit				Context No.	Average Depth (m)
Made ground - loose mixture of stone, brick and soil				(201)	0.22m
Modern fill - loose mixture of dark soil and stones of various sizes and conglomerates				(202)	0.34m
Modern cut - sharp break of slope (top), gradual break of slope (base), rounded base				[203]	N/A
Foundation deposit - compacted layers of cream sand mix				(204)	0.33m
Foundation cut - straight edges with flat base				[205]	N/A
Internal flooring - compacted layers of cream sand mix and pebble base				(206)	0.04m
Floor base layer - loose, small stones and pieces of brick				(207)	0.09m
Buried topsoil - crumbly dark grey sandy clay with small stones				(208)	0.18m
Buried subsoil - friable dark grey-brown clay-sand, occ. small stones				(209)	0.15m
Summary					
Test Pit 2 contained no archaeological features or deposits and extensive disturbance was caused by tree roots, an adjacent tank and demolished outbuildings.					



3.3 Test Pit 3 - a representative cross-section of the deposits on Site

3.3.1 Test Pit 3 was excavated down to natural, 1.72m deep, and the excavator stepped out the edges of the test pit to ensure rubble would not fall into the test pit while the Site Supervisor was cleaning the sections. The use of a ladder allowed safe access for hand cleaning and recording. As spot dating identified Prehistoric pottery sherds, the test pit was extended westwards to establish whether the edges of a feature might become evident. No features were identified and additional Post-medieval and modern pottery sherds and the broken stem of a clay pipe confirmed that the finds were redeposited and the layer was disturbed. Due to its similarity with other deposits in the same stratigraphic sequence in the non-disturbed test pits, the mottled colour and the texture, it was interpreted as buried subsoil.

Table 3: Summary of results from Test Pit 3

Test Pit	3	Figure	6	Plate	3
Ground Level (m OD): 48.34		Level of Natural (m OD): 46.84m			
Total depth 1.72m					
Size		2m x 3m			
Deposit			Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
				W End	E End
Made ground - loose mixture of stone, brick and soil			(301)	0.70m	0.60m
Buried topsoil - crumbly dark grey sandy clay, small stones			(302)	0.20m	0.16m
Buried subsoil - friable dark orange silty-clay, small stones			(303)	0.40m	0.44m
Alluvium - firm orange + grey clay, occasional chalk flecks			(304)	0.42m+	
Summary					
Test Pit 3 contained no archaeological features or deposits but an assemblage of Prehistoric pottery sherds, Post-medieval and modern pottery sherds and the broken stem of a clay pipe.					



3.4 Test Pit 4

- 3.4.1 Test Pit 4 was excavated down to a depth of 1.4m. The excavator stepped out the edges of the test pit to ensure rubble would not fall into the test pit while the Site Supervisor was cleaning the sections. The use of a ladder allowed safe access for hand cleaning and recording. There was further evidence of disturbance in this Test Pit. A clay drainage pipe was located at the southeast corner and a modern pipe protruded from the east-facing section and each section face showed a different depth or level of made ground above the buried topsoil. The section drawing shows a rubble layer jutting out from the west-facing section left in place to avoid further collapse of this part of the section.
- 3.4.2 An overlay of the 1989 Ordnance Survey map over the proposed plan, the foundations for which had been constructed at the time of the watching brief, revealed that a former boundary ditch was located at the eastern edge of Test Pit 4.

Table 4: Summary of results from Test Pit 4

Test Pit	4	Figure	7	Plate	4
Ground Level (m OD): 48.53m		Level of Natural (m OD): 47.23m			
Total depth 1.4m					
Size		1.5m x 1.3m			
Deposit				Context No.	Average Depth (m)
Made ground – loose mixture of stone, brick and soil				(401)	0.54m
Buried topsoil – crumbly dark grey sandy clay with small stones				(402)	0.48m
Buried subsoil – friable dark grey-brown clay-sand with small stones				(403)	0.36m
Alluvium – firm orange and grey clay with occasional chalk flecks				(404)	0.05m+
Summary					
Test Pit 4 contained no archaeological features or deposits.					



4 Conclusion

4.1.1 The aim of a wide distribution of test pits was to provide the opportunity for recording of and an understanding of deposits across the Site. This aim has been achieved despite the level of disturbance. The nature of the buried topsoil, buried subsoil and the natural was consistent in both description and depths across the rear of the Site. The disturbance of the buried topsoil and subsoil, indicated by a mix of finds from different archaeological periods, is also evidenced by the variations in colour and texture across the Site. Based on the finds and known uses of the Site, it is likely that this disturbance was caused by landscaping. The alluvial deposits do vary in colour, appearing as different layers of deposition, and is likely to have derived from the Kennet. The limited evidence for structures ties in with historic mapping, indicating a low level of activity in this part of the Site during the Post-medieval period. There was no evidence of the extent and development of the Medieval village of Theale, which is currently undefined.



5 OASIS ID: archwayh1-333204

Project details

Project name	Watching brief at The Red Lion, 5 Church Street, Theale
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief on the mechanical excavation of 4 test pits.
Project dates	Start: 25-01-2018 End: 08-11-2018
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	AH_RL-143 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	Boundary ditch Post Medieval
Significant Finds	pot sherd Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Test Pits'
Development type	Small-scale extensions (e.g. garages, porches, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Status	Complete

Project location

Site location	BERKSHIRE WEST BERKSHIRE THEALE The Red Lion, 5 Church Street, Theale, Reading.
Postcode	RG7 5BU
Study area	0 Square metres NGR - SU 6408 7128 LL - 51.436388888889 -1.078055555556 (decimal) LL - 51 26 11 N 001 04 41 W (degrees)
Site coordinates	Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 48.18m Max: 49.18m
Status	Complete



Project creators

Name of Organisation (other)	Archway Heritage
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator (other)	Mary Neale
Project director/manager (other)	Mary Neale
Project supervisor (other)	Mary Neale
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr Eric Benjamin
Status	Complete

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	'No physical archive'
Digital Archive recipient (other)	West Berkshire HER
Digital Archive ID	N/A
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Text'
Digital Archive notes	A digital record is likely to be all that is appropriate, based on the findings.
Paper Archive Exists?	'No paper archive'
Status	Complete



Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)_1	
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Description	Portable Document Format of the report text, figures and images.	
URL	N/A	
Status	Complete	



6 References

Documents

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief. Online publication - http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIfAS&GWatchingbrief_2.pdf

Colony Architects, 2014. Heritage statement to support the redevelopment of land within the curtilage of The Red Lion Pub, 5 Church St, Reading, West Berkshire, RG7 5BU.

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2018. *National Planning Policy Framework*. s.l.:s.n

Historic England, 2015. Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE). Online publication - <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/morphe-project-managers-guide/HEAG024-MoRPHE-Managers-Guide.pdf/>

Maps

A Map of the Parish of Tilehurst in the County of Berkshire as referred to by the annexed award by William Church, Abingdon 1811-1817. (Inclosure Map Q/RDC 83B B.24.1.I)

Plan of the Parish of Tilehurst, Berkshire - Tilehurst St Michael 1844 (Tithe Map D/DI/132/1 B.24.1.G)



7 Glossaries

GLOSSARY 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERIODS

GLOSSARY 2 GENERAL TERMS

Glossary 1: Archaeological periods

Prehistoric	The periods from the Ice Ages to Roman occupation in AD 43
Palaeolithic	800,000 years ago - 10,000 BC.
Mesolithic	<i>Circa</i> 10,000 BC – 4,000 BC.
Neolithic	<i>Circa</i> 4000 BC - 2300 BC.
Bronze Age	<i>Circa</i> 2300 BC-700 BC.
Iron Age	<i>Circa</i> 700 BC - AD43
Roman	<i>Circa</i> AD 450
Early Medieval and Saxon	<i>Circa</i> AD450-1066
Medieval	<i>Circa</i> AD 1550
Post-medieval	<i>Circa</i> AD 1550 to 1900



Glossary 2: General terms

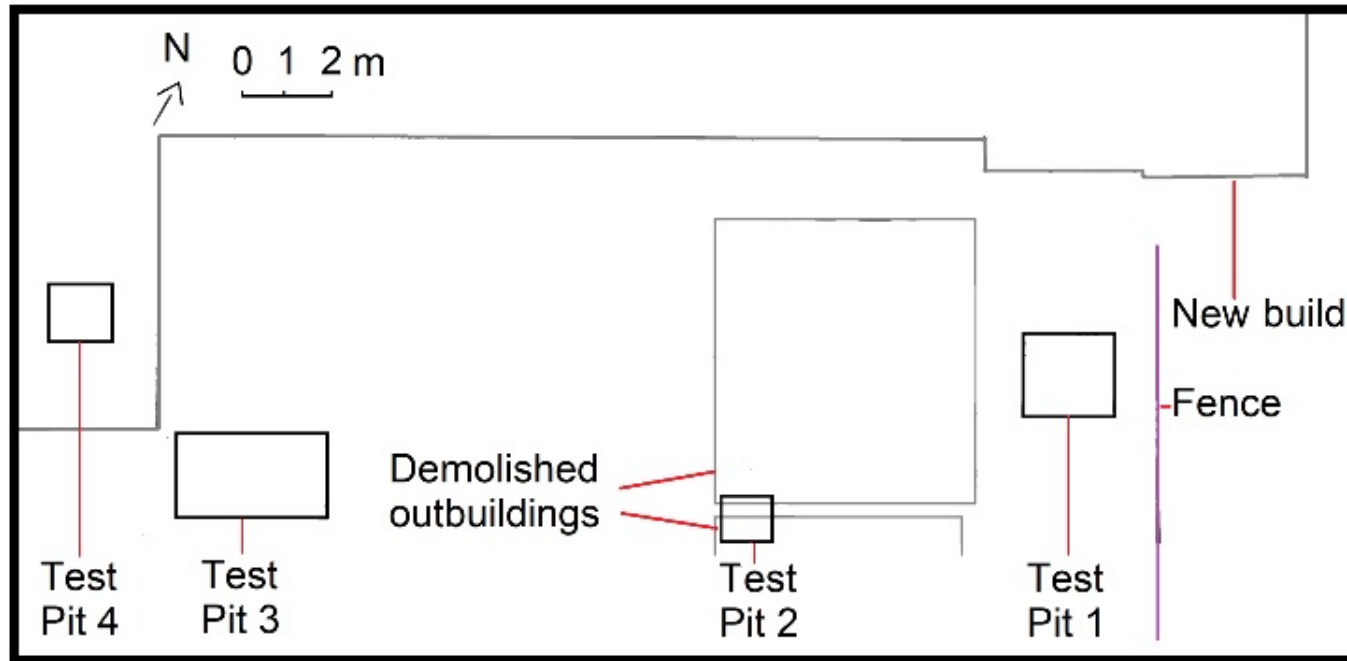
For the avoidance of confusion, the terms used in this report follow the definitions given below:

Alluvial Deposit	Soil deposited by running water
CBM	Ceramic building material
Context	The position and associations of an artefact, ecofact, feature or archaeological find in space and time, assisting with determining chronology and interpreting function and significance
Dendro-chronology	The dating of wood by counting tree rings and comparing against a sample record, to provide an approximate age of the feature or structure to which it belongs
Ecofact	Archaeological finds not manufactured by humans including bones and vegetal remains that inform past diet or environments
Feature	Any non-portable physical structure or element that was made or altered by humans including a wall, post hole, pit or floor
<i>in situ</i>	Anything in its natural or original position or place, also referred to as 'primary context'
LOE	Limit of excavation
Natural	Undisturbed natural geology
NGR	National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid
OD	Ordnance datum
Organic	Material derived from or relating to living organisms
Radiocarbon dating	A dating technique used to determine the age of organic materials less than 50,000 years old
Relative dating	A system of dating archaeological remains and strata in relation to each other
Romano-British	Refers to the fusion of cultures, dating between AD 43 and <i>circa</i> AD 410
Secondary context	Context of archaeological material that has been wholly or partially altered by transformation processes after its original deposit
Stratigraphy	The study of layers (strata) of sediments, soils and material culture

Appendix 8



Figure 1: Site location



Client

Mr. Eric Benjamin

Application Site

The Red Lion, 5 Church Street,
Theale, Reading

Title

Figure 2

Date

29/10/18



Reproduced with kind permission from Colony
Architects

Figure 2: Location of test pits (based on drawing Drawing 074 03-10 P2)

Appendix 8

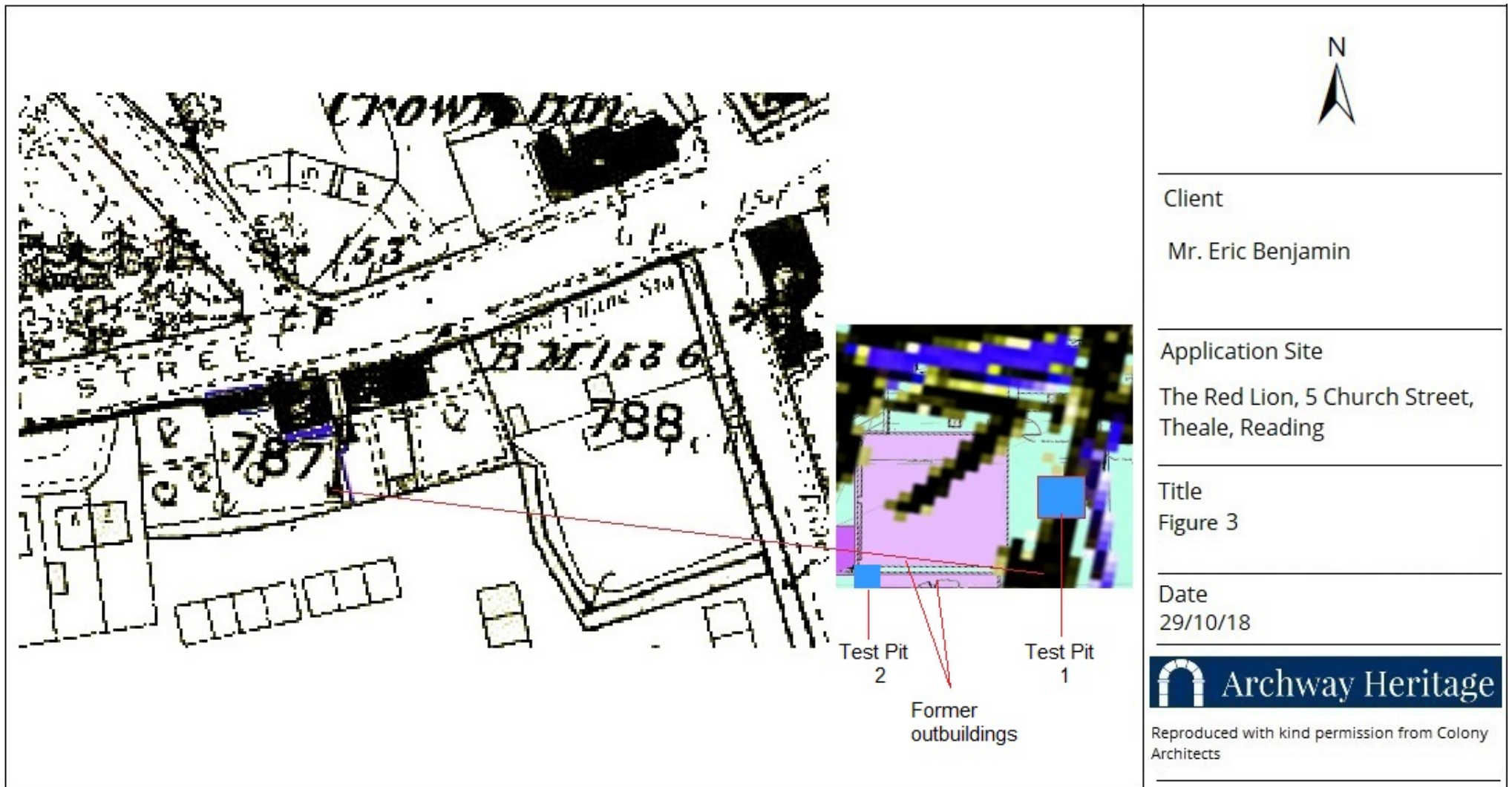


Figure 3: Overlay of Ordnance Survey maps from 1879 and 1965

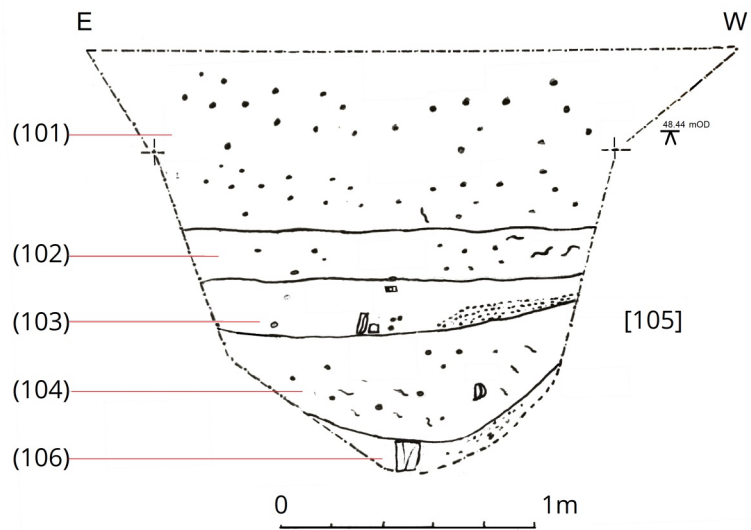


Figure 4: Section drawing of Test Pit 1

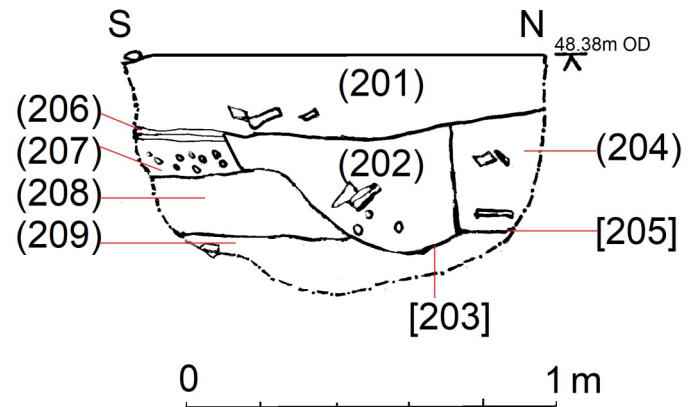


Figure 5: Measured sketch of Test Pit 2

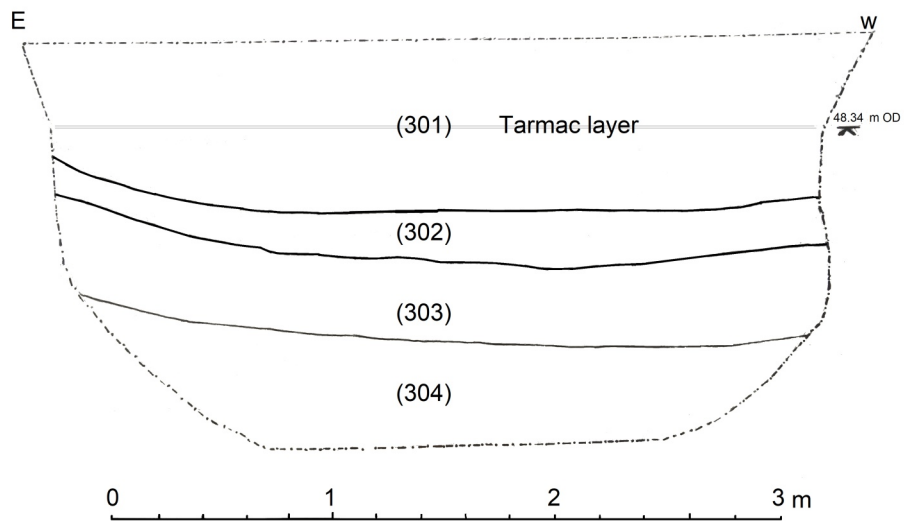


Figure 6: Measured sketch of Test Pit 3

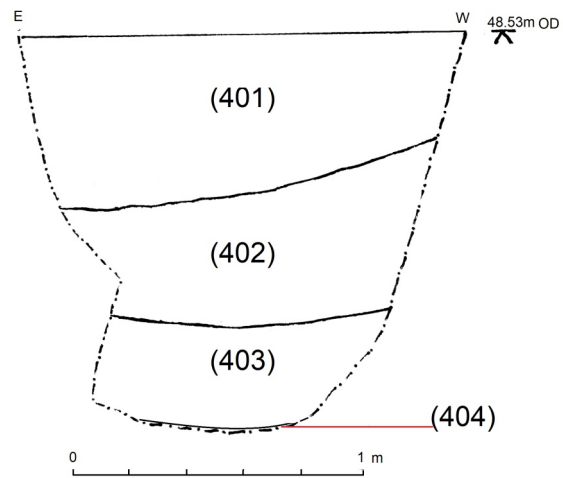


Figure 7: Measured sketch of Test Pit 4

Appendix 6.5



Plate 1: The north-facing section of Test Pit 1

Appendix 6.5



Plate 2: The west-facing section of Test Pit 2

Appendix 6.5



Plate 3: The north-facing section of Test Pit 3

Appendix 6.5



Plate 4: The north-facing section of Test Pit 4