



## Extra Care, Avenue School Site, Basingstoke Road, Reading, Berkshire (Phase 1)

Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report





**EXTRA CARE, AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD,  
READING, BERKSHIRE  
(PHASE 1)**

**Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report**

Prepared for:  
**Reading Borough Council**  
Civic Offices  
Reading  
RG1 7TD

by  
**Wessex Archaeology**  
Portway House  
Old Sarum Park  
SALISBURY  
Wiltshire  
SP4 6EB

Report Reference:73580.03


**June 2010**

## DISCLAIMER

THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT WAS DESIGNED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A REPORT TO AN INDIVIDUAL CLIENT AND WAS PREPARED SOLELY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THAT CLIENT. THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT DOES NOT NECESSARILY STAND ON ITS OWN AND IS NOT INTENDED TO NOR SHOULD IT BE RELIED UPON BY ANY THIRD PARTY. TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY WILL NOT BE LIABLE BY REASON OF BREACH OF CONTRACT NEGLIGENCE OR OTHERWISE FOR ANY LOSS OR DAMAGE (WHETHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL) OCCASIONED TO ANY PERSON ACTING OR OMITTING TO ACT OR REFRAINING FROM ACTING IN RELIANCE UPON THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT ARISING FROM OR CONNECTED WITH ANY ERROR OR OMISSION IN THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THE REPORT. LOSS OR DAMAGE AS REFERRED TO ABOVE SHALL BE DEEMED TO INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, ANY LOSS OF PROFITS OR ANTICIPATED PROFITS DAMAGE TO REPUTATION OR GOODWILL LOSS OF BUSINESS OR ANTICIPATED BUSINESS DAMAGES COSTS EXPENSES INCURRED OR PAYABLE TO ANY THIRD PARTY (IN ALL CASES WHETHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL) OR ANY OTHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL LOSS OR DAMAGE

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

<b>SITE CODE</b>	73580	<b>ACCESSION CODE</b>		<b>CLIENT CODE</b>	
<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REF.</b>	09/01396/REG3A	<b>NGR</b>	NGR 472052 171805		

VERSION	STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE
01	E	SEC/SDT/AIM	NDT			\\PROJECTSERVER\WESSEX\PROJECTS\66714\EV ALUATION POST EX\REPORT\

\* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

**EXTRA CARE, AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, READING,  
BERKSHIRE (PHASE 1)**

**Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief  
Report**

**Contents**

	Summary .....	iv
	Acknowledgements.....	v
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
	1.1 Project Background .....	1
	1.2 The Site, Location and Geology .....	2
	1.3 Standards .....	3
<b>2</b>	<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>3</b>
	2.1 Desk-based Assessment and Previous Fieldwork .....	3
	2.2 Previous Archaeological Works within the Site .....	3
<b>3</b>	<b>AIMS AND OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>EVALUATION AND WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
	4.1 Evaluation.....	4
	4.2 Watching Brief .....	5
<b>5</b>	<b>EVALUATION RESULTS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
	5.1 Trench 1 .....	5
	5.2 Trench 2 (Figure 2).....	5
	5.3 Trench 3 .....	5
	5.4 Trench 4 (Figure 2).....	6
	5.5 Trench 5 (Figure 2).....	6
<b>6</b>	<b>WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>FINDS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
	7.1 Finds assessment.....	7
<b>8</b>	<b>PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>8</b>
	9.1 Summary of presence and survival within the Site.....	8
	9.2 Potential development impacts.....	8
<b>10</b>	<b>ARCHIVE.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
	11.1 Bibliography.....	9

**Appendix 1:** Evaluation and watching brief trench summaries

**Appendix 2:** Oasis report

**Figures**

Figure 1: Site location showing Evaluation Trenches

Figure 2: Selected photographs and section drawings of Trenches 2, 4, 5 and Trench

1

**Tables**

Table 1: Finds totals by context

**EXTRA CARE, AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, READING,  
BERKSHIRE (PHASE 1)****Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report****Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Reading Borough Council to carry out a programme of archaeological works during initial site investigations at the Extra Care, Avenue School site (Phase 1), Basingstoke Road, Reading, Berkshire.

The former school site has been proposed for redevelopment and an archaeological desk-based assessment was carried out in 2007. Although no previous archaeological fieldwork has been carried out within the boundaries of the site, the assessment noted a number of significant archaeological sites and findspots within the immediate area. Although the site had been the subject of significant modern landscaping, the assessment concluded that there was some potential for the survival of archaeological features and artefacts.

The programme of archaeological fieldwork comprised:

- A watching brief carried out during the hand excavation of three short trenches by specialist subcontractors to investigate the extent of the root systems of trees flanking the site entrance (Trenches A-C).
- Five small evaluation trenches located within areas close to the former southern building to assess the potential for the survival of archaeological features (Trenches 1-5).
- A subsequent watching brief carried out during the machine excavation of three short trenches by specialist subcontractors to investigate the extent of the root systems of trees flanking the rear of the proposed building and three short trenches to investigate deposits within the footprint of the proposed building (Trenches D-I).

No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the course of the watching brief or evaluation, although the potential for archaeological features can not be discounted. The evaluation confirmed the results of the previous desk-based assessment and ground investigation work, which recorded significant landscaping, levelling and terracing across the majority of the Site.

The natural London Clay along the upper terrace of high ground at the northern edge of the Site lies at a relatively shallow depth of between 0.20m – 0.60m. Although no archaeological remains were found in this area, which has undergone disturbance and truncation from the previous construction of the main access road, this area still retains some potential for the survival of archaeological features. Further archaeological monitoring may be required during the proposed works on the road.

Within the lower terrace, deep modern made ground and original ground surfaces were encountered to the south of the former school building, up to 1.20m below the present ground surface. The works associated with the new development are unlikely to have a significant impact on any potential deeply buried archaeological features within the lower southern area of the Site.

**EXTRA CARE, AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, READING,  
BERKSHIRE (PHASE 1)****Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report****Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Reading Borough Council (RBC) and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Helen Pickering and Richard Pike (RBC). Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Keith Kirby and Chris Simmans of Hampshire County Council Project Services who are overseeing the design of the Phase 1 works and Eilean Appleton of Willmott Dixon Housing Limited who oversaw the tree root investigations. Thanks are also due to Mary O'Donoghue, the Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, who monitored the works on behalf of the Local Planning Authority for her advice and information regarding previous investigations in the vicinity.

The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Andy Manning and the fieldwork undertaken by Steve Thompson, Ross Lefort and Susan Clelland. The report was prepared by Steve Thompson and Andy Manning with the finds assessed by Lorraine Mephram, geoarchaeological advice by Dave Norcott and Illustrations by Linda Coleman and S.E. James.

**EXTRA CARE, AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, READING,  
BERKSHIRE (PHASE 1)****Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report****1 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Reading Borough Council to undertake archaeological test-pitting and a watching brief during the initial groundworks located within the vicinity of the Extra Care, Avenue School site (Phase 1), Basingstoke Road, Reading, Berkshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 472052 171805 and hereafter referred to as 'the Site'. (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 An outline planning application (09/01396/REG3A) was submitted to, and approved by, Reading Borough Council in October 2009 for the provision of residential units including extra care housing with associated landscaping and car parking, within the 2ha area of the former Avenue School complex.

1.1.3 The development is effectively divided into two phases;

- **Phase 1**- 40 unit extra care housing with associated landscaping and car parking, which is focused on the southern most school building and occupies the southern half of the Avenue School Site (approximately 0.9ha), and
- **Phase 2**- 60-70 residential units with associated landscaping and car parking, which occupies the northern half of the Site (approximately 1.1ha).

1.1.4 This report is solely restricted to the results of the fieldwork within the Phase 1 area. At this stage, no archaeological works have taken place within the Phase 2 area.

1.1.5 The proposed development of the Phase 1 area (**Figure 1**) lies largely within the footprint of the former Avenue School building, which has been shown by recent geotechnical test-pitting to have been heavily impacted by previous construction on the Site (Ashdown Site Investigation Limited 2009).

1.1.6 However, the access road along the northern limits of the Phase 1 area and isolated areas close to the original building and now within the footprint of the proposed new build may lie within an area less heavily impacted by previous activity and therefore contain the best potential for the survival of archaeological features.

1.1.7 A archaeological condition (Condition 10) was attached to the outline approval notice for the Phase 1 and 2 development;

Condition 10

*No development shall take place on the Extra Care Housing scheme site or on any of that part of the land on which residential housing units not included within the Extra Care Housing Scheme are to be provided as part of this Permission in such*

*phases as may be approved by the local planning authority in writing in accordance with condition 4 above until the applicant, or their agents or their successors in title, has secured a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one stage of work) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation and timetable, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in respect of the relevant site(s). The agreed programme of works to be implemented in accordance with the agreed timetable and the development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.*

*Reason: To ensure that any archaeological remains within the site are adequately investigated and recorded or preserved in situ in the interest of protecting the archaeological heritage of the borough.*

- 1.1.8 As part of the initial site works, investigation of the root systems of trees located at the Site's northwestern entrance and at the rear of the proposed building was required. In consultation with Berkshire Archaeology, these works were subject to an archaeological watching brief (**Figure 1**)
- 1.1.9 In addition, and in the absence of any previous archaeological work within the Site, the opportunity was taken to excavate a small number of trenches within previously undisturbed land to determine the nature of deposits within the footprint of the proposed building (**Figures 1 and 2**).
- 1.1.10 In the event that significant archaeological remains were identified, the results of the test pit evaluation and watching brief would inform the nature and extent of any subsequent archaeological mitigation.
- 1.1.11 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (WA 2010) and was submitted to, and subsequently approved by, Berkshire Archaeology before the commencement of the fieldwork, which took place between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of March and on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2010.

## **1.2 The Site, Location and Geology**

- 1.2.1 The Site (Phases 1 and 2) occupies a series of artificial terraces bordered by Basingstoke Road to the west and Northumberland Avenue to the east. To the north are a number of domestic residencies on Avenue Heights and a telephone exchange and to the south the Site is bordered by a recent development at the back of properties fronting on to Surrey Road.
- 1.2.2 The Phase 1 Site is divided into two main areas. The main east-west access road is situated along an upper terrace at the northern edge of the Phase 1 area, lying at a height of approximately 61.30m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Immediately to the south of the access road, the ground slopes steeply downwards into the main level building area, which lay at a height of 58.50 m aOD.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology of the Phase 1 area is London Clay, although with occasional isolated outcrops of an overlying deposit of Boyn Hill Gravel forming part of the River Terrace Deposits associated with the Thames.



### **1.3 Standards**

- 1.3.1 The fieldwork and post-excavation was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief and field evaluation* (IfA 2008).

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Desk-based Assessment and Previous Fieldwork**

- 2.1.1 In support of the outline planning application, a detailed cultural heritage assessment was prepared on the area up to 250m beyond the boundaries of the Avenue School Site. The assessment detailed known archaeological information, including 19 sites and buildings recorded on the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record (Entec 2007).

- 2.1.2 The report noted that there was no evidence of archaeological activity within the Site itself. The majority of the recorded sites related to isolated finds within the vicinity of the Site (13 in all), which spanned a wide range of periods, from a small number of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic hand axes and flint tools, Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval pottery and a single Romano-British coin, all found to the west and north of the Site during previous gravel extraction and residential development.

- 2.1.3 Of particular significance was the discovery of the remains of a Bronze Age/Iron Age cremation cemetery noted, during gravel extraction, approximately 200m to the north of the Site. In addition, archaeological evaluation in 1988, approximately 200m to the west of the Site, noted three groups of post-medieval gullies, ditches and post-holes (Entec 2007, 10).

- 2.1.4 The assessment also noted that there had been substantial disturbance to the original ground levels within the Site, with evidence of substantial terracing and landscaping.

- 2.1.5 The report concluded that although the archaeological potential of the Site was low, there was the potential for prehistoric and later artefactual evidence and survival of archaeological features within small areas which may have survived the significant landscaping of the Site and the surrounding area.

- 2.1.6 Two further recent archaeological trial trench evaluations have taken place along Northumberland Avenue, along the eastern edge of the Site. Although the evaluations found no evidence of deep modern disturbance, no archaeological features or finds were noted (Mary O'Donoghue *pers comm.*).

### **2.2 Previous Archaeological Works within the Site**

- 2.2.1 No archaeological investigation works have previously been undertaken on the Site however intrusive works were carried out during geotechnical investigations of the underlying deposits in 2009.

- 2.2.2 Thirteen test pits and boreholes within the Phase 1 area (Ashdown Site Investigation Limited 2009) were excavated and confirmed that the underlying geology is Boyn Hill Gravel which forms part of the River Terrace Deposits associated with the Thames and which overlies the London Clay Formation. The Boyn Hill Gravel deposit appears to be present over much of

the Phase 2 Site, with the southern edge of the gravel outcrop running east to west approximately centrally across the Site at the northern edge of the Phase 1 area.

- 2.2.3 The bore holes and test pits identified that considerable disturbance had occurred across the Site, however in a number of areas the natural geology (London Clay) was revealed at a relatively shallow depth of 0.40-0.60m below the current ground surface suggesting that there was potential for archaeological features to survive. These areas include the majority of the access road and isolated pockets adjacent to the former school buildings.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1.1 The WSI outlined the aims and objectives of the evaluation and watching brief and these are summarised below.
- 3.1.2 The objectives of the archaeological evaluation and watching brief were to;
- locate, identify, investigate and record the presence/absence of archaeological features or deposits,
  - If significant archaeological features or deposits were located, then the watching brief and test pitting would establish, where possible, the extent, date, character, relationship, condition and significance of archaeological features, artefacts and deposits within the area impacted, and
  - To inform the scope and nature of any requirements for potential future mitigation.

### **4 EVALUATION AND WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Evaluation**

- 4.1.1 Five small trenches (recorded as Trenches 1-5), each approximately 2m by 2m were excavated within areas close to the former southern building which had been previously assessed as having potential for the survival of archaeological features.
- 4.1.2 The location of the trenches was initially agreed with Berkshire Archaeology prior to the commencement of works. However due to existing ground conditions, a number of the trench locations (Trenches 2, 4 and 5) were subsequently adjusted, although these trenches were still situated in the areas identified as having the best potential for the survival of archaeological remains.
- 4.1.3 The excavation of the evaluation trial pits was carried out by mechanical excavator, in discrete 0.20 spits under constant archaeological supervision and ceased at the upper surface of significant archaeological features and/or deposits, *in situ* geology or 1.2m depth, whichever was encountered first. Topsoil and subsoil/overburden deposits were stored separately and scanned for artefacts.

## 4.2 Watching Brief

- 4.2.1 The watching brief initially involved the constant monitoring during hand excavation by specialist subcontractors of three trenches (recorded as Trenches A, B and C) along the edge of the entrance road way into the Site. The trenches, between 5-11m in length, 1m in width and up to 1.2m in depth were excavated to investigate the root systems of trees which flanked the Site entrance.
- 4.2.2 This was followed by a subsequent watching brief during the machine excavation by specialist subcontractors of three trenches (recorded as Trenches D, E and F) along the southern side (rear) of the proposed building and three trenches (Trenches G, H and I) within the footprint of the proposed building. These trenches were between 3-6m in length, 0.6-1m in width and were up to 2.2m deep. They were sited to investigate the root system of trees (Trenches D-F) and ground deposits (Trenches G-I).

## 5 EVALUATION RESULTS

### 5.1 Trench 1

- 5.1.1 Trench 1 was positioned at the base of the terrace slope and was excavated to a depth of 1.56m (59.24m aOD). No *in situ* natural geology or archaeology was observed and the observed deposits comprised dumps of modern made ground material.

### 5.2 Trench 2 (Figure 2)

- 5.2.1 Trench 2 was located upon the upper terrace and was excavated to a depth of 0.92m (60.36m aOD).
- 5.2.2 No archaeological features were identified. The sequence of deposits comprised a modern made ground (**201**) up to 0.41m in depth, which overlaid the London Clay (deposits **202** and **203**). A very clear horizon visible within the London Clay deposit was investigated. Geoarchaeological assessment of the deposits strongly suggests that the upper deposit of London Clay (**202**) had a dry and aerated nature as a result of bioturbation/recent disturbance, which had oxidised the clay and gave it a distinct reddy brown hue (Dave Norcott *pers comm.*).

### 5.3 Trench 3

- 5.3.1 Trench 3 was located at the top of the upper terrace slope towards the eastern edge of the Phase 1 Site and was excavated to a depth of 1.15m (60.15m aOD).
- 5.3.2 No archaeological features were identified. The sequence of deposits comprised a modern made ground (**301**) up to 0.20m in depth, which overlaid the top of the natural London Clay (**303** and **304**) at a height of 61.10m aOD. The profile of the natural London Clay deposits was similar to that observed in Trench 2.
- 5.3.3 Part of a modern service (cut **305** and fill **3002**) was observed running approximately north-south along the eastern edge of the trench, cut into the top of the natural London Clay.

#### **5.4 Trench 4 (Figure 2)**

- 5.4.1 Trench 4 was positioned on the lower southern terrace adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site and was excavated to a depth of 1.40m (57.11m aOD).
- 5.4.2 Made ground up to 0.66m in depth was encountered and comprised of three distinct deposits (**401**), (**402**) and (**403**) which overlaid modern concrete footings and a modern buried ground surface indicated by a surviving turf line (**404**). This thin ground surface overlaid a second made ground deposit (**405**), up to 0.28m in depth, which sealed a second buried ground surface (**406**) at a height of 57.54m aOD (0.97m below the current ground surface).
- 5.4.3 This lower preserved ground surface (**406**) contained clinker and charcoal fragments, although no datable material was recovered. This deposit was 0.19m in depth and sealed the top of the natural London Clay (**407**) which was at a height of 57.37m aOD. No archaeological features were observed.

#### **5.5 Trench 5 (Figure 2)**

- 5.5.1 Trench 5 was positioned on the lower southern terrace adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site and was excavated to a depth of 1.47m (57.08m aOD).
- 5.5.2 The sequence of deposits was similar to that observed in Trench 4 and comprised a topsoil (501), modern made ground up to 0.65m in depth (**502** and **503**) which overlaid a modern buried ground surface (**504**) which overlaid a second made ground deposit (505) up to 0.35m in depth, which overlaid a second lower preserved ground surface (**506**) which contained medieval and post-medieval Ceramic Building Material (CBM), modern pottery, clinker and charcoal fragments. The natural underlying geology was not revealed in Trench 5.

### **6 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS**

- 6.1.1 Trenches A and B were located on the northern side with Trench C located to the south (**Figure 1**).
- 6.1.2 Trenches A and B revealed similar overburden layers associated with the road comprising tarmac, hogging and a base layer of crushed clinker-rich material acting as road make up as well as packing material around a number of service ducts which ran along the northern side of the road. This overburden was up to 0.65m thick.
- 6.1.3 The natural London Clay geology was only partially exposed in Trench A due to the presence of thick concrete layers associated with the ducts whereas in Trench B it was revealed at 59.33m aOD, 0.65m below the current ground surface.
- 6.1.4 The natural geology had been impacted upon more heavily on the northern side of the road as a result of the service ducts, as shown in Trench C where only 0.34m of overlying road material sealed the natural geology which was encountered at 59.94m aOD, some 0.60m higher than in Trench B.

- 6.1.5 There was a very sharp horizon between the overlying road material and the underlying geology; an indication that the upper levels of the natural had been truncated when the road was constructed.
- 6.1.6 Trenches A, B and C were located along the southern side (rear) of the proposed building (**Figure 1**).
- 6.1.7 Trenches D and E revealed similar overburden deposits derived from recent demolition and levelling which sealed a layer of garden subsoil found to contain modern brick rubble and tree root disturbance. The excavation of Trench E ceased when tree roots were encountered within the subsoil.
- 6.1.8 The natural London Clay geology was reached in Trench D at 58.8m aOD. The sharp interface between the natural geology and the overlying layer of subsoil suggests the upper levels of the geology had been truncated during landscaping.
- 6.1.9 In Trench F, a service pipe was identified at its northern end, cutting through a 0.85m deep mixed layer of subsoil and re-deposited natural clay and gravel.
- 6.1.10 Within the footprint of the proposed building, Trenches G, H and I, all the trenches contained remnant foundation walls constructed using a stretcher bond made up of a mixture of both frogged and re-used unfrogged red brick, with a 2.2m deep cellar wall identified in Trench I (**Figure 2**).
- 6.1.11 The alignment of these walls corresponded with the alignment of the demolished school building of which they are thought to be a part (**Figure 1**). The natural London Clay geology was reached in Trench H at 60.06m aOD and was also observed at the east end of Trench G at 60.09m.

## 7 FINDS

### 7.1 Finds assessment

- 7.1.1 A minimal quantity of finds was recovered, deriving from two contexts (**501** and **506**). These consist only of pottery and ceramic building material (CBM); quantities are given in **Table 1**.
- 7.1.2 Both sherds of pottery are from modern redware flowerpots. The ceramic building material includes one medieval roof tile and three medieval or post-medieval tiles (all from context **506**); the other two fragments were from post-medieval bricks.
- 7.1.3 Given the quantities of finds encountered, and their date range, retention for long-term curation is not recommended. All finds have therefore been discarded.

**Table 1: Finds totals by context (number/weight in grammes)**

Context	CBM	Pottery
501	1/9	1/12
506	5/304	1/19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6/313</b>	<b>2/31</b>

## **8 PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

- 8.1.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the course of the evaluation.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

### **9.1 Summary of presence and survival within the Site**

- 9.1.1 Although the area available for evaluation was limited, this programme of works achieved its aim of providing information regarding the potential for the survival of archaeological remains on the Site.
- 9.1.2 No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the course of the watching brief or evaluation. The evaluation has confirmed the results of the previous ground investigation pits, which recorded significant landscaping, levelling and terracing across the majority of the Site.
- 9.1.3 Within the upper terrace of high ground along the northern edge of the Site, Trenches A-C, 2 and 3 located the top of the natural London Clay at a relatively shallow depth of between 0.20m – 0.40m below the present ground surface. Although geoarchaeological assessment of the upper part of the London Clay does suggest some degree of disturbance, this area still retains the potential for the survival of archaeological features.
- 9.1.4 Within the lower terrace, Trenches 1, G, H and I revealed deep made ground deposits. Further to the south of the former school building, the remaining two trenches identified a sequence of two buried ground surfaces, both sealed below made ground deposits. However, material recovered from the earliest ground surface in Trench 5 (approximately 1.20 below the present ground surface) included modern pottery.

### **9.2 Potential development impacts**

- 9.2.1 Within the footprint of the new proposed building, previous ground investigation has indicated very heavy disturbance from previous construction which is likely to have removed all archaeological remains. The southern lower part of the Site around the proposed building has been shown to contain isolated areas of preserved stratigraphy, although even at a depth of 1.20m, modern material is present. Further archaeological remains may be preserved at a lower depth, but the nature of the proposed works within the area surrounding the new building (new access roads) is unlikely to have a deep impact on any potentially significant archaeological features, even if present.
- 9.2.2 The northern terrace on which Trenches 2 and 3 were excavated revealed that the underlying natural geology encountered at 60.87m aOD and 61.10m aOD in Trenches 2 and 3 respectively had suffered some degree of truncation by either the construction or demolition of the school buildings and therefore it is possible that similar truncation of the surrounding area would have badly disturbed any archaeological features which may remain.
- 9.2.3 The area which demonstrated the highest potential for the preservation of archaeological remains is within the northern terrace, where although the top of the shallow natural deposits may have been subject to some degree of

previous truncation. It is possible that there still may be potential for deeply cut archaeological features.

- 9.2.4 The proposed development requires the current road to be removed and the ground reduced to a level approximately 0.50m below its current level to around 59.70m aOD. Therefore the proposed works will have an impact upon any archaeological remains which may survive below the current road and may require a programme of archaeological mitigation.

## **10 ARCHIVE**

- 10.1.1 The project archive, consisting of an A4 ringbinder, a collection of digital photographs and survey data is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code **73580**. In due course the paper archive will be deposited with The Museum of Reading, Reading, Berkshire.

## **11 REFERENCES**

### **11.1 Bibliography**

Ashdown Site Investigation Limited, 2009, Extra Care Centre, The Avenue School Site, Basingstoke Road, Reading: Factual and Interpretative Report on the Ground Investigation, Report No. LW20158/B December 2009

Entec UK Limited, 2007, The Avenue School, Reading, Berkshire: Cultural Heritage Assessment, Unpublished Client Report Ref. 21579, October 2007

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008, Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief and evaluation

Wessex Archaeology, 2010, Extra Care, Avenue School Site, Basingstoke Road, Reading, Berkshire (phase 1). Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief. Report Ref. 73580.01

## Appendix 1: Evaluation and watching brief trench summaries

### Evaluation

bgl = below ground level. CBM = ceramic building material

TRENCH 1			Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 2.2m x 1.6m</b> <b>Max. depth: 1.56m</b>		<b>Centre Co-ordinate</b> <b>NGR 472018.35, 171818.82</b>		<b>Ground level: 60.80 – 60.33m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 59.24m aOD</b>
context	Description		depth (bgl)	
101	<i>Made Ground</i>	Deposit of brick rubble, tarmac and other modern material forming bank adjacent to entrance road way into the Site. Material forms bank separating flat area of ground to the south from the road. Mid brown sandy clay matrix.	0-1.56m	

TRENCH 2			Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 2.4m x 2.3m</b> <b>Max. depth: 0.92m</b>		<b>Centre Co-ordinate</b> <b>NGR 472072.99, 171826.74</b>		<b>Ground level: 61.28m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 60.36m aOD</b>
context	Description		depth (bgl)	
201	<i>Made Ground</i>	Modern disturbed ground following the demolition of the school buildings. Mix of redeposited natural mid yellow brown sandy clay with brick rubble throughout.	0-0.41m	
202	<i>Natural</i>	Mid yellow brown clay with mid grey patches, some bioturbation. Some areas of this deposit have been heavily impacted upon by later activity with modern material pressed into it and modern interventions into it (not visible in section). Lack of anthropogenic material indicates that this is upper levels of natural London clay. There is a sharp horizon with the underlying (203) due to the dry and aerated nature of the upper levels of natural as a result of bioturbation oxidising the clay and giving it a distinct reddy brown hue. Due to the extent of modern disturbance (202) was removed. No archaeology was observed.	0.41-0.89m	
203	<i>Natural</i>	Compact mid yellow clay with grey patches and areas of sand, with occasional mud stone inclusions. Very compact and contains common snail shells. London clay natural	0.89m+	

TRENCH 3			Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 2.8m x 1.9m</b> <b>Max. depth: 1.15m</b>		<b>Centre Co-ordinate</b> <b>NGR 472103.25, 171801.42</b>		<b>Ground level: 61.30m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 60.15m aOD</b>
context	Description		depth (bgl)	
301	<i>Made Ground</i>	Mid to dark grey brown silty clay redeposited material following the demolition of the school buildings, material laid down to level the site afterwards.	0-0.20m	
302	<i>Fill</i>	Tarmac rich fill of modern intrusion (305).	0.20-0.60m	
303	<i>Natural</i>	Dark brown silty clay with patches of yellow clay. Tenacious and sticky, which has been cut through by (305). Overlies natural layer (304). Lack of anthropogenic material indicates that this is upper levels of natural London clay. There is a sharp horizon with the underlying (304) due to the dry and aerated nature of the upper levels of natural as a result of bioturbation oxidising the clay and giving it a distinct reddy brown hue. Due to the extent of modern disturbance (303) was removed. No archaeology was observed.	0.20-0.63m	
304	<i>Natural</i>	Light brown clay with yellow patches and areas of sand and mudstone inclusions. London clay natural	0.63+	
<b>305</b>	<b><i>Cut</i></b>	<b>Modern intrusion into (603).</b>	<b>0.40m deep.</b>	



<b>TRENCH 4</b>			Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 3.2m x 3m Max. depth: 1.40m</b>		<b>Centre Co-ordinate NGR 471989.93, 171788.77</b>	<b>Ground level: 58.51m aOD Base Level: 57.11m aOD</b>	
<b>context</b>	<b>Description</b>		<b>depth (bgl)</b>	
401	<i>Made Ground</i>	Brick and stone rubble deposit, levelling layer laid down following the demolition of the school buildings.	0-0.08m	
402	<i>Made Ground</i>	Dark grey black silty clay with common modern inclusions, levelling layer.	0.08-0.24	
403	<i>Made Ground</i>	Thick layer of redeposited mid yellow brown natural clay and gravels, with pockets of grey clay.	0.24-0.66m	
404	<i>Layer</i>	Mid grey silty clay layer, possible remnant of turf line, indicating a buried ground surface. Modern in date.	0.66-0.69m	
405	<i>Made Ground</i>	Mid yellow brown silty clay laminated deposit. Multiple depositions of material resulting in heterogeneous layer of levelling material.	0.69-0.97m	
406	<i>Buried ground surface</i>	Mid grey brown sandy silt layer sealed by (405) and overlies natural (407), contains fragments of CBM, clinker and charcoal. Possible buried ground surface, identical to (506) in Trench 5.	0.97-1.14	
407	<i>Natural</i>	Mixed and mottled light to mid yellow brown silty clay with occasional sandy patches. Upper level has fragments of CBM pressed into it.	1.14m+	

<b>TRENCH 5</b>			Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 3.6m x 2m Max. depth: 1.47m</b>		<b>Centre Co-ordinate NGR 472014.03, 171780.59</b>	<b>Ground level: 58.55m aOD Base Level: 57.08m aOD</b>	
<b>context</b>	<b>description</b>		<b>depth (bgl)</b>	
501	<i>Topsoil</i>	Dark brown silty clay, remnant of topsoil of area of grass around the perimeter of the now demolished school buildings.	0-0.15m	
502	<i>Made Ground</i>	Thick layer of redeposited mid yellow brown natural clay and gravels, with pockets of grey clay.	0.15-0.70m	
503	<i>Fill</i>	Sandy deposit with pipe – originally thought to be the fill of a service trench (507)	0.60m-0.70m	
504	<i>Layer</i>	Mixed layer of dark brown and dark grey sandy silt clay, possible buried ground layer equal to (404).	0.70-0.85m	
505	<i>Made Ground</i>	Mixed and mottled redeposited clay layer, mid yellow brown with reddish purple patches.	0.85-1.20m	
506	<i>Buried Ground Surface</i>	Mid to dark grey brown sandy silt with patches of yellow clay, contains fragments of CBM and charcoal. Equal to (406).	1.20-1.47m+	
<b>507</b>	<b>Cut</b>	<b>Number used for original 'service' cut -</b>	<b>0.10m thick</b>	

**Watching Brief**

<b>TRENCH A</b>		Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 4.7m x 0.80m</b> <b>Max. depth: 0.46m</b>	<b>Centre Line Co-ordinates</b> <b>NGR 472006.49, 171852.28</b> <b>NGR 472009.33, 171848.41</b>	<b>Ground level: (NW) 58.77m aOD-</b> <b>(SE) 59.67m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 58.31m aOD</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (bgl)</b>	
Tarmac	Current toad surface	0 – 0.17m	
Concrete	concrete layer around service ducts.	0.17-0.30m	
Concrete	Concrete layer, supporting material around service ducts.	0.30-0.46m	
Natural	London clay only partially revealed at base of trench. Could not be investigated due to modern services.	0.46m+	

<b>TRENCH B</b>		Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 8.80m x 0.90m</b> <b>Max. depth: 1m</b>	<b>Centre Line Co-ordinates</b> <b>NGR 472009.00, 171845.80</b> <b>NGR 472013.93, 171838.44</b>	<b>Ground level: (NW) 59.69m aOD-</b> <b>(SE) 60.09m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 58.68m aOD</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (bgl)</b>	
Tarmac	Current toad surface	0 – 0.17m	
Type 1 Hogging	Base layer beneath road surface	0.17-0.46m	
Made ground	Power station waste material, coal and coke waste used as base layer which sits directly upon the natural basal geology.	0.46-0.65	
Natural	London Clay. The upper levels of the natural have been truncated as there is a very clear horizon with the overlying power station waste make up material. Typical construction technique, upper levels stripped to create level working surface.	0.65m+	

<b>TRENCH C</b>		Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 11m x 0.75m</b> <b>Max. depth: 1.20m</b>	<b>Centre Line Co-ordinates</b> <b>NGR 472003.85, 171842.14</b> <b>NGR 472009.61, 171832.60</b>	<b>Ground level: (NW) 59.69m aOD-</b> <b>(SE) 60.39m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 59.19m aOD</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (bgl)</b>	
Tarmac	Current toad surface	0 – 0.17m	
Type 1 Hogging	Base layer beneath road surface	0.17-0.34m	
Natural	London Clay. The upper levels of the natural have been truncated as there is a very clear horizon with the overlying power station waste make up material. Typical construction technique, upper levels stripped to create level working surface.	0.34m+	

<b>TRENCH D</b>		Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 4.3m x 0.6m</b> <b>Max. depth: 1.2m</b>	<b>Centre Line Co-ordinates</b> <b>NGR 472088.68, 171781.56</b> <b>NGR 472084.62, 171782.98</b>	<b>Ground level: 59.6m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 58.4m aOD</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (bgl)</b>	
Levelling	Layer of levelled building rubble.	0-0.8m	
Subsoil	A re-worked garden subsoil with modern rubble and tree root disturbance.	0.4-0.8m	
Natural	London Clay. Yellow brown clay with terrace gravels in a sandy matrix. A very sharp upper interface indicating landscaping.	0.8m+	

<b>TRENCH E</b>		Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 3m x 0.6m</b> <b>Max. depth: 0.48m</b>	<b>Centre Line Co-ordinates</b> <b>NGR 472070.77, 171788.04</b> <b>NGR 472067.73, 171788.85</b>	<b>Ground level: 59.67m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 59.19m aOD</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (bgl)</b>	
Levelling	Layer of levelled building rubble and dark brown humic garden topsoil.	0-0.3m	

Deliberate	Layer of gravel sealing probable water pipe aligned NW-SE along northern side of the trench.	0.15-0.48m
Subsoil	A mixed re-worked imported subsoil with chalk fleck inclusions and tree root disturbance.	0.3m+

<b>TRENCH F</b>		Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 3m x 0.6m</b> <b>Max. depth: 1.1m</b>	<b>Centre Line Co-ordinates</b> <b>NGR 472039.12, 171783.59</b> <b>NGR 472038.53, 171780.76</b>	<b>Ground level: 58.13m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 57.04m aOD</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (bgl)</b>	
Tarmac	Layer of rubber (playground) tarmac.	0-0.1m	
Concrete	Layer of concrete ground surface.	0.1-0.25m	
Made ground	Mixed layer of re-worked London clay and gravel, and yellow brown clay loam subsoil containing modern brick.	0.25-1.1m	

<b>TRENCH G</b>		Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 5.5m x 0.6m</b> <b>Max. depth: 1.2m</b>	<b>Centre Line Co-ordinates</b> <b>NGR 472054.72, 171816.78</b> <b>NGR 472049.56, 171816.78</b>	<b>Ground level: 60.89m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 59.69m aOD</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (bgl)</b>	
Levelling	Layer of demolition rubble.	0-0.25m	
Made ground	Mixed layer of re-worked London clay and yellow brown clay loam subsoil containing modern brick and cut through by service trenches.	0.25-0.8m	
Wall	E-W aligned brick cavity wall. Red frogged LBC brick 0.22x0.11x0.65m with yellow sandy lime mortar. Concrete filled cavity.	0.25-1.2m	
Natural	London Clay. Yellow grey stiff clay with rubble pressed into the exposed 0.2m depth of the deposit. Revealed in east end of trench only. May be re-deposited.	0.8-1.2m	

<b>TRENCH H</b>		Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 6m x 0.6m</b> <b>Max. depth: 1.2m</b>	<b>Centre Line Co-ordinates</b> <b>NGR 472042.66, 171816.20</b> <b>NGR 472040.54, 171810.67</b>	<b>Ground level: 60.76m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 59.56m aOD</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (bgl)</b>	
Levelling	Layer of demolition rubble	0-0.3m	
Made ground	Mixed layer of re-worked London clay and yellow brown clay loam subsoil containing modern brick and cut through by service trenches.	0.3-1m	
Wall	E-W aligned brick wall. Stretcher bond. LBC brick 0.22x0.11x0.65m with yellow sandy lime mortar.	0.3-1m+	
Deliberate	Deliberate backfill of demolition rubble abutting the northern side of wall.	0.3-1m+	
Natural	London Clay. Yellow brown clay with terrace gravels in a sandy matrix.	0.7m+	

<b>TRENCH I</b>		Type:	Machine Excavated
<b>Dimensions: 6m x 1m</b> <b>Max. depth: 2.2m</b>	<b>Centre Line Co-ordinates</b> <b>NGR 472040.76, 171817.60</b> <b>NGR 472035.29, 171819.94</b>	<b>Ground level: 60.78m aOD</b> <b>Base Level: 58.58m aOD</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (bgl)</b>	
Levelling	Layer of demolition rubble	0-0.25m	
Tarmac	Thin layer of tarmac	0.25-0.27m	
Concrete	Thin layer of concrete formation	0.27-0.32m	
Deliberate	Deliberate backfill of demolition rubble within cellar.	0.32-2.2m	
Cellar	Defined by red frogged LBC brick 0.22x0.11x0.65m with yellow sandy lime mortar. Stretcher bond. Cellar base not fully exposed – appeared to be brick overlain with a thin skim of concrete.	0.32-2.2m	

## Appendix 2: Oasis report

**OASIS ID: wessexar1-76592**

### Project details

Project name AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, READING - PHASE I

Short description of the project The site has been proposed for redevelopment and an archaeological desk-based assessment was carried out in 2007. Although no previous fieldwork has been carried out at the site, the assessment noted a number of significant sites and findspots within the area. Although the site had been the subject of significant modern landscaping, the assessment concluded that there was some potential for the survival of archaeological features and artefacts. The programme of archaeological fieldwork comprised a watching brief carried out during the hand excavation of trenches to investigate the extent of root systems of trees flanking the site entrance and five small evaluation trenches located within areas close to the former southern building to assess the potential for survival of archaeological features. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the course of the fieldwork, although the potential for features can not be discounted. The evaluation confirmed the results of previous work which recorded significant landscaping, levelling and terracing across much of the Site. The natural London Clay along the upper terrace of high ground at the northern edge of the Site lies at a relatively shallow depth of between 0.20m - 0.60m. Although no archaeological remains were found in this area, this area still retains some potential for the survival of archaeological features. Further monitoring may be required during the proposed works on the road. Within the lower terrace, deep modern made ground and original ground surfaces were encountered to the south of the former school building, up to 1.20m below the present ground surface. The works associated with the new development are unlikely to have a significant impact on any potential deeply buried archaeological features within the lower southern area of the Site.

Project dates Start: 05-03-2010 End: 07-06-2010

Previous/future work No

Any associated project reference codes 73580 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes 09/01396/REG3A - Planning Application No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Other 13 - Waste ground

Monument type NONE

Significant Finds NONE

Methods & techniques 'Targeted Trenches' 'Visual Inspection'

Development type Housing estate

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	BERKSHIRE READING READING AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, READING
Study area	2.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	SU 472052 171805 50.9515746606 -1.327901581960 50 57 05 N 001 19 40 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0.20m Max: 1.20m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	of Wessex Archaeology
Project originator	brief Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project originator	design Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	A Manning
Project supervisor	S Thompson
Project supervisor	S Clelland

### Project archives

Physical Exists?	Archive	No
Digital recipient	Archive	Museum of Reading
Digital Archive ID		73580
Digital Contents		'other'
Digital available	Media	'Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'
Paper recipient	Archive	Museum of Reading
Paper Archive ID		73580
Paper Contents		'other'
Paper available	Media	'Context sheet','Drawing','Notebook - Excavation',' General Notes','Report','Unspecified Archive',' Research'

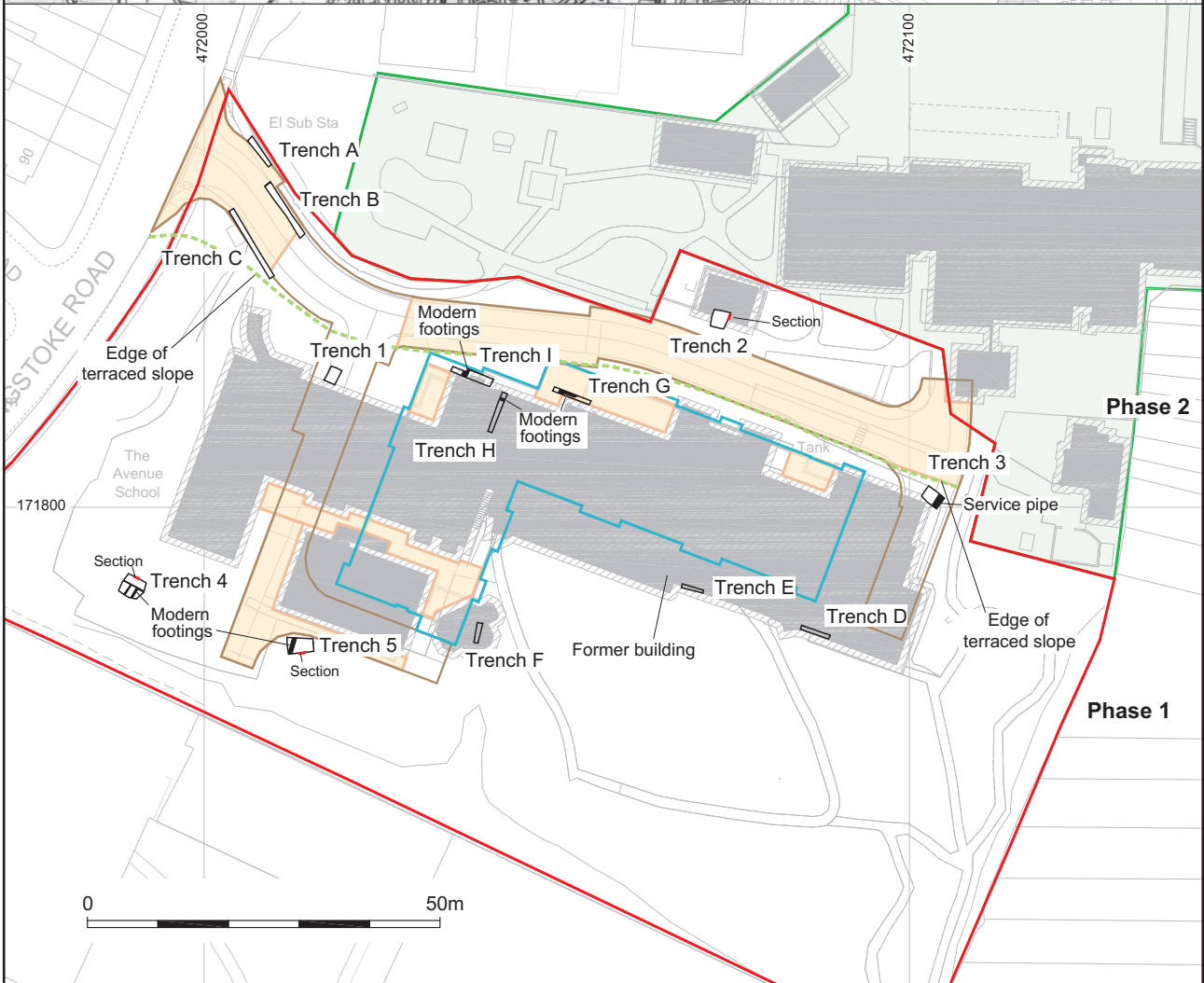
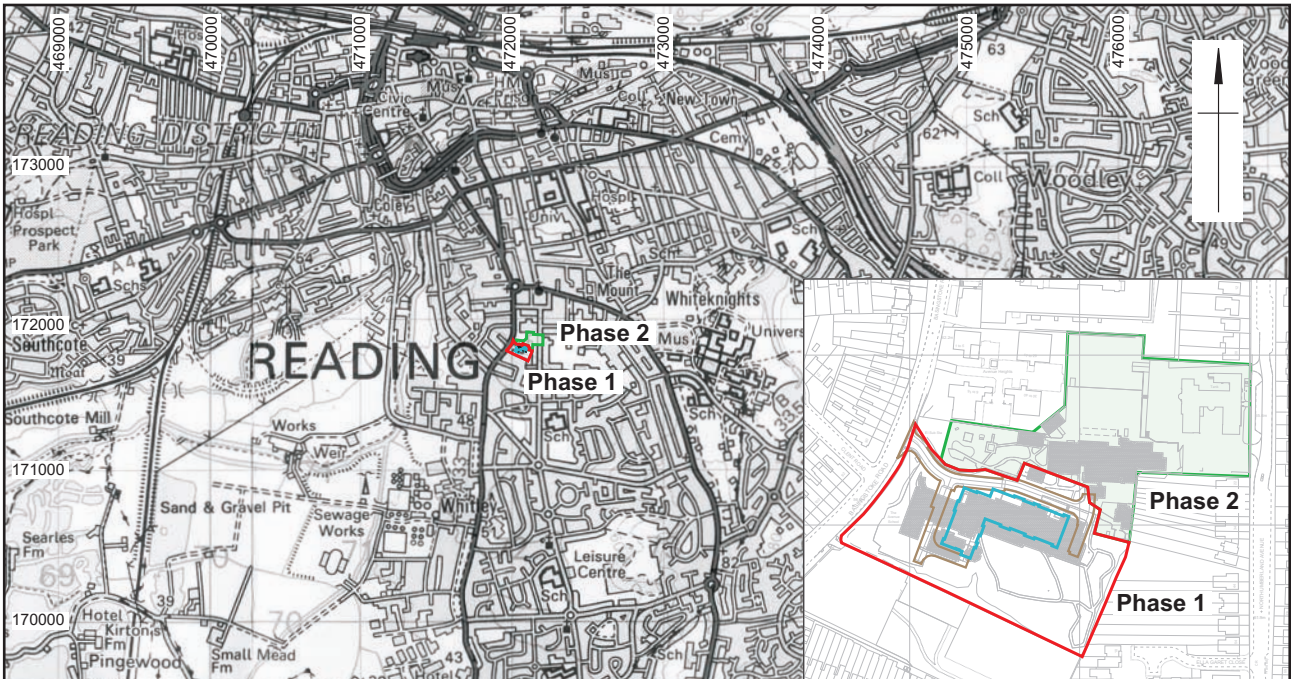
### Project bibliography 1


Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	EXTRA CARE, AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE (PHASE 1)
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Thompson, S, Clelland, S and Manning, A
Other bibliographic details	73580.03

Date 2010  
Issuer or publisher Wessex Archaeology  
Place of issue or Salisbury  
publication

Entered by Andrew Manning (a.manning@wessexarch.co.uk)  
Entered on 5 July 2010



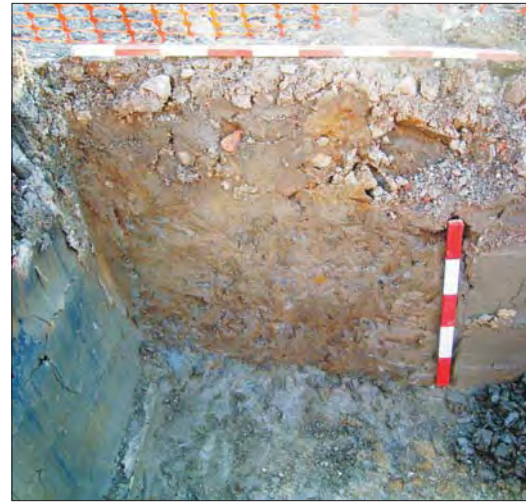


<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #f4a460; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Area of potential archaeological survival</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #add8e6; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Extent of proposed building</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #f4a460; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Access Road</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Evaluation trench</li> </ul>	<p>Reproduced from the 2000 Ordnance Survey 1:50 000 Landranger © map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 6EB. Licence Number: 100028190.          This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. (100019180), (2009)          This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p>		
	<p>Date: 09/06/10</p>	<p>Revision Number: 2</p>	
	<p>Scale: 1:50 000 &amp; 1:1000 @ A4</p>	<p>Illustrator: LJC/SEJ</p>	
	<p>Path: Y:\PROJECTS\73580\Drawing Office\Report Figs\Eval_WBreport\10_06_09</p>		

Site location showing Evaluation Trenches

Figure 1





North-west facing section of Trench 2



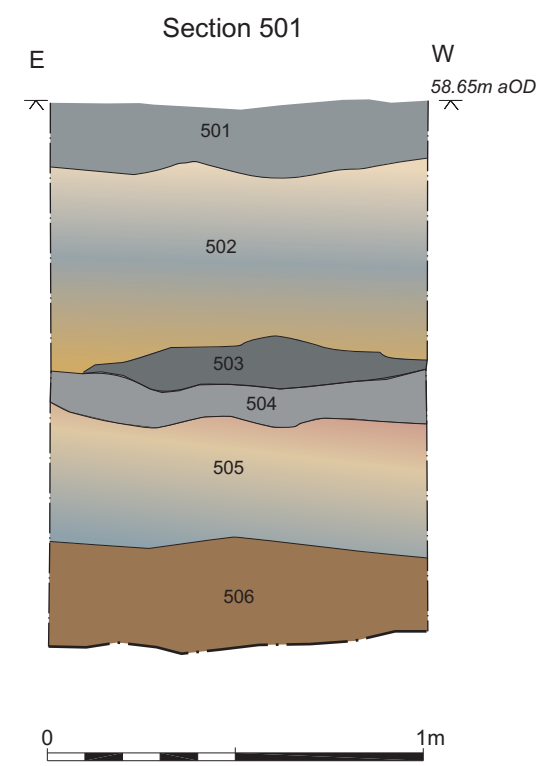
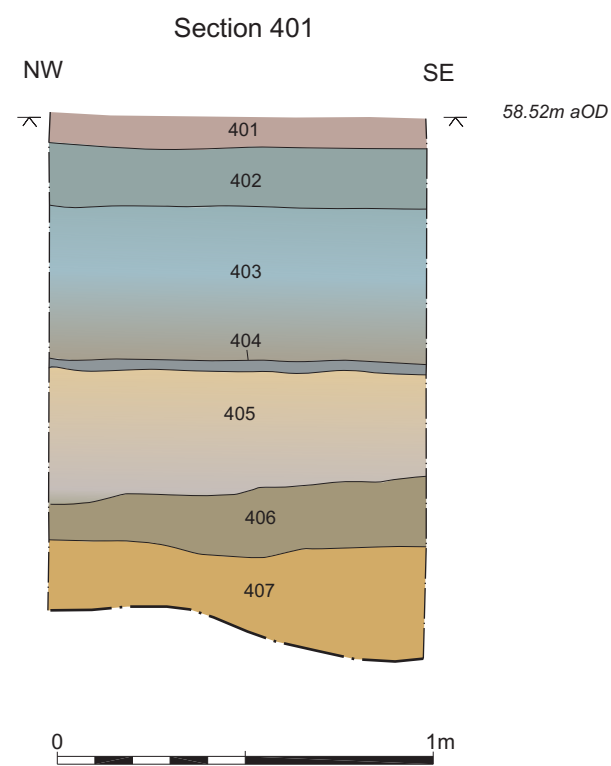
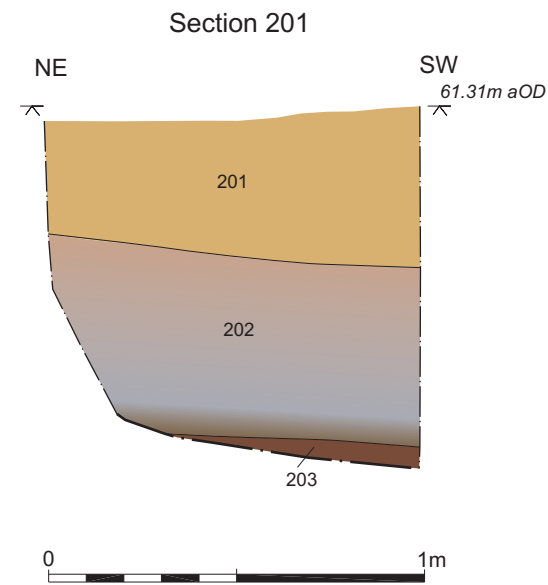
South-west facing section of Trench 4



North facing section of Trench 5



South-west facing section of Trench B



East facing view of cellar wall in Trench I





**WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED.**

**Registered Head Office:** Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 [info@wessexarch.co.uk](mailto:info@wessexarch.co.uk)

With regional offices in **Maidstone** and **Sheffield**

For more information visit [www.wessexarch.co.uk](http://www.wessexarch.co.uk)

