

**136 UPPER WOODCOTE ROAD  
CAVERSHAM,  
READING  
BERKSHIRE.**

**NGR: SU 7002 7589 (centred)**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

January 2020  
Report No. 1336



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES**

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**Quality Assurance**

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with AMS's Quality Procedures (ISO 9001: 2015)

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## **SUMMARY**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with an extension to 136 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham (NGR: SU 7002 7589 (centred)). The work was commissioned by Oliver Curlett of Jacobs Engineering Group.

The watching brief comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of the new extension.

The monitoring work revealed natural deposits of orange brown clay with gravel at a minimum depth of 0.72m below the Modern ground level. The natural clays were sealed by a mid brown silty clay subsoil, which was between 0.38m to 0.72m thick. The subsoil was in turn sealed by a Modern gravel surface, along with debris from the demolition of the former conservatory. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within the monitored areas.

The results of the survey identified intact subsoils across the study area, however, it would appear that the site was previously stripped of topsoil, possibly during the construction of the present property.

## GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### *Archaeology*

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

### *CBM*

Ceramic building material.

### *Medieval*

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

### *Natural*

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

### *NGR*

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### *OD*

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

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey.

### *Post-medieval*

The period from *c.* AD 1500 onwards.

### *Prehistoric*

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43. Traditionally sub divided into; Palaeolithic – *c.* 500,000 BC to *c.* 12,000 BC; Mesolithic – *c.* 12,000 BC to *c.* 4,500 BC; Neolithic – *c.* 4,500 BC to *c.* 2,000 BC; Bronze Age – *c.* 2,000 BC to *c.* 800 BC; Iron Age – *c.* 800 BC to AD 43.

### *Romano-British*

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *c.* AD 410.

### *Saxon*

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief during groundworks at 136 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire (NGR: SU 7002 7589 (centred)). The work was commissioned by Oliver Curlett of Jacobs Engineering Group.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a programme of archaeological watching brief. The WSI complied with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2008), the General Standards for Historic Environment Projects issued by Berkshire Archaeology (2016) and the standard archaeological policies of Reading Borough Council, as well as the principles of NPPF (2019).

## 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission (Ref. 180904) had been granted for an extension to 136 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham. The study area was located within an area of high archaeological potential and therefore Berkshire Archaeology requested that a programme of archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the groundworks.
- 2.2 The underlying geology is recorded as *Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation* (undifferentiated) - Chalk, with superficial deposits of *Boyn Hill Gravel Member* - Sand and Gravel (BGS online viewer). The grounds of the property are roughly level, at an approximate height of 69m AOD.
- 2.3 The study area was located on the western side of Caversham, immediately north of the A4074, within an area of residential development. It was located less than 1km north of the River Thames and the Thames gravels are well known as an area for Prehistoric habitation.
- 2.4 The Historic Environment Record notes that a Roman building and several finds of Roman date have been uncovered close to the study area, including immediately adjacent to the site.
- 2.5 The site therefore contained the potential for evidence of Prehistoric and Roman date. This did not prejudice the works against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

## 3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological recording were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;

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

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

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

4.1 All intrusive groundworks were monitored and recorded under constant archaeological supervision in order to identify any archaeological finds, features or deposits. An excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket was employed during these works as well as manual hand excavation.

4.2 Appropriate sections were recorded to be able to characterise the stratigraphy of the area impacted by the groundworks.

4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

## **5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

5.1 The groundworks comprised the excavation of a footing trench for the proposed extension along the northern and western side of 136 Upper Woodcote Road (see Figure 2). The trench was approximately 450m wide and was excavated to a depth of upto 1.03m below the Modern ground level.

5.2 Prior to our arrival on site, the conservatory attached to the northern side of the house had been demolished.

5.3 The stratigraphic sequence of the study area consisted of natural orange brown clay gravels, which were present at a depth of between 0.72m to 1.03m below the Modern ground level. The natural clay and gravels were sealed by a mid brown silty clay (102) with occasional small to medium stone inclusions, this was between 0.3 to 0.4m thick within the northern footing trench and was upto 0.72m thick within the western trench. The subsoil was then sealed by Modern debris, rubble and stone (101), up to 0.24m thick, which was present within the footprint of the former conservatory and a Modern gravel surface (103), up to 0.31m thick which was present across the rest of the excavation area.

5.4 The results of the survey identified intact subsoils across the study area, however, it would appear that the site had previously been stripped of topsoil, possibly during the construction of the present property.

- 5.5 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within any of the excavated areas.

## 6 ARCHIVING, STORAGE & PUBLICATION

- 6.1 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited in due course with Reading Museum. Copies of the report will be supplied to Berkshire Archaeology and an additional copy will be deposited with the site archive.
- 6.2 The report will be published in an appropriate form in a relevant journal, within 12 months from completion of fieldwork. An OASIS record will also be completed and submitted on completion of the project.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Reading.

English Heritage, 2006, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*, Swindon.

Foundations Archaeology, 2018, *136 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Roland Smith and Fiona MacDonald at Berkshire Archaeology and Oliver Curlett of Jacobs Engineering Group for their assistance during this project.



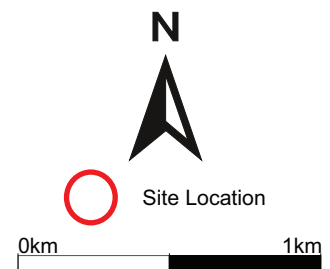
APPENDIX 1 Stratigraphic Table

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	Description	Later Than	Earlier Than
101	0.6+	7.7+	0.24	Modern debris, stone and rubble from the demolition of the former conservatory. No charcoal present. Modern finds were noted and discarded.	102	n/a
102	0.6+	7.7+	0.3 to 0.72	Subsoil: Silty mid brown clay with occasional small to medium stones inclusions. No charcoal or artefactual evidence present.	Natural	101
103	12+	8+	0.31	Modern gravel surface.	102	n/a
				Natural deposits of orange brown clay and gravels were present at a depth of between 0.72 and 1.03m below the Modern ground level.		
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within the watched area.		

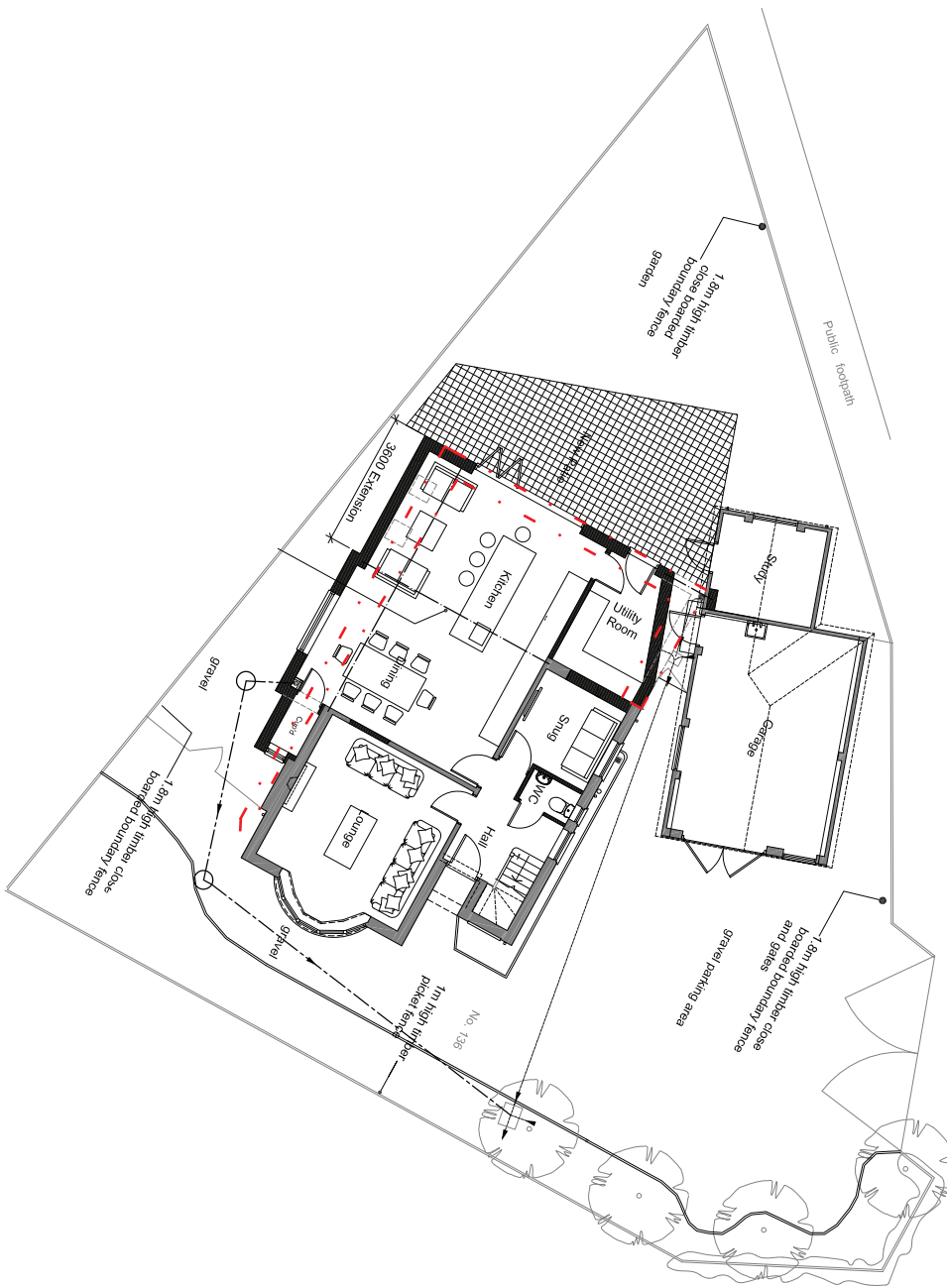


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**Site Code: UWR18**  
**Accession Code:**




**FIGURE 1: Site Location**




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**Site Code: UWR18**  
**Accession Code:**

N

  
 - . - . Foundation Trenches

  
 0m 10m

**FIGURE 2: Watching Brief Location**





PHOTOGRAPH 1: NORTH FACING REPRESENTATIVE SECTION 001



PHOTOGRAPH 2: NORTH FACING REPRESENTATIVE SECTION 001



PHOTOGRAPH 3: WEST FACING REPRESENTATIVE SECTION 002



PHOTOGRAPH 4: WEST FACING REPRESENTATIVE SECTION 002



PHOTOGRAPH 5: WEST FACING REPRESENTATIVE SECTION 002



PHOTOGRAPH 6: WEST FACING REPRESENTATIVE SECTION 002

LARGE SCALE = 1M

Site Code: UWR18 Accession Code:
<b>FIGURE 3: Photographs</b>