

**SHORLAND OAKS,  
PRIORY LANE  
WARFIELD  
BERKSHIRE**

**NGR: SU 875 708**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**November 2005**

**Report No. 457**

**Quality Assurance**

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## **SUMMARY**

In September 2005 Foundations Archaeology was commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief to monitor construction groundworks at Shorland Oaks, Priory Lane, Warfield, Berkshire (NGR: SU 875 708 (centred)). The work was undertaken on behalf of Winslow Homes Limited.

The archaeological works comprised the monitoring of machine excavated groundworks which included topsoil/subsoil stripping and the excavation of drainage and strip foundation trenches.

No significant archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present within the excavated groundworks.

Visibility and preservation conditions were good throughout the project.

## 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 *circa* AD 1500.

### **Natural**

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, in this case the natural is brown clay.

### **NGR**

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### **OD**

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

### **OS**

Ordnance Survey

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In September 2005 Foundations Archaeology undertook a archaeological watching brief to monitor construction groundworks at Shorland Oaks, Priory Lane, Warfield (NGR: SU 875 708 (centred)), on behalf of Winslow Homes Limited.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, revised 2001), Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines) issued by English Heritage (London Region) and the Specification prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2005).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief and conforms to the specification set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of The Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).

## **2 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Planning permission (Reference 05/00211/FUL) has been granted by Bracknell Forest Borough Council for the construction of new residential units and an associated roadway.
- 2.2 The study area lies adjacent to a known medieval field system with associated medieval pottery. Prehistoric remains are also known from nearby. A watching brief has been previously undertaken on an adjacent site at land to the rear of 9-11 Priory Lane.
- 2.3 The study area therefore contained the potential for significant archaeological features and deposits, predominantly associated with the Medieval period. This did not prejudice the works against the recovery of finds or features associated with other periods.

## **3 AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains.
- 3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the specification (Foundations 2005).
  - i) to define, identify and record any archaeological deposits within the site area, and date these where possible.

- ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site.
- iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 All significant groundworks within the study area were observed by an archaeologist. The groundworks consisted of mechanical area topsoil/subsoil stripping and the excavation of drainage and strip foundation trenches. Any features or deposits of potential archaeological significance were to be manually excavated and recorded to appropriate standards.

## 5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The natural geology, which consisted of a heavy brown clay, was encountered at an average depth of 0.43m below the existing ground surface. This was overlaid by a yellow clay/silt subsoil (102), up to 0.28m thick. No charcoal or artefactual material was noted within this horizon. The subsoil was directly sealed by a mid grey brown clay silt topsoil (101), which contained much root disturbance.
- 5.2 No archaeological deposits or features were identified during the course of the groundworks.

## 6 NATURE OF THE RECORD

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

*Context Sheets*

*Plans*

*Sections*

*General Site Photographs (black and white print and colour slide)*

- 6.2 The on-site methodologies used to recover any evidence were set out in the specification (Foundations 2005). In summary, the following excavation methods were utilised: observation of all substantial groundworks associated with the construction of the new dwellings. The groundworks were undertaken by contractors both manually and by machine. All site recording was undertaken in accordance with the specification (ibid.) and Foundations *Archaeology Technical Manual 3 (Excavation Manual)*. All site records are available in the site archive.
- 6.3 Following the completion of the Watching Brief an ordered, indexed, and internally consistent site archive has been compiled in accordance with

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

- 6.4 In accordance with the specification (2005), an *OASIS* form will be completed and submitted.
- 6.5 The archive will be deposited with Reading Museum.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 In general, ground conditions were amenable to archaeological investigation and interpretation.
- 7.2 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present in any of the studied areas and no evidence was located for a continuation of the known field system.
- 7.3 The current works have confirmed that the site has limited archaeological potential.

## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Foundations Archaeology 2005 *Land at Shorland Oaks, Priory Lane, Warfield: Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished Typescript Report.

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

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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