

**33 NORTHBROOK STREET,  
NEWBURY,  
WEST BERKSHIRE.**

**NGR: SU 4709 6742**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

Report No. 918  
November 2013



**33 NORTHBROOK STREET,  
NEWBURY,  
WEST BERKSHIRE.**

**NGR: SU 4709 6742**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**November 2013**

**Report No. 918**

**Quality Assurance**

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with AMS's Quality Procedures (BS EN ISO 9001: 2000)

Author: T. Michaels

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Approved: D. King

QA Checked: R. King

*This report has been compiled with all reasonable skill care and attention to detail within the terms of the project as specified by the client and within the general terms and conditions of Archaeological Management Services Ltd trading as Foundations Archaeology but no explicit warranty is provided for information and opinions stated. AMS Ltd accepts no responsibility whatsoever to third parties to whom this report or any part thereof is made known. Any such party relies on this report at their own risk. Copyright of this document is retained by AMS Ltd, but unlimited licence to reproduce it in whole or part is granted to the client and/or their agents and/or assignees on payment of invoice.*

## **CONTENTS**

Summary

Glossary

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND
- 3 AIMS
- 4 METHODOLOGY
- 5 RESULTS
- 6 CONCLUSIONS
- 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY
- 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **FIGURES**

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Site Area

Figure 3: Watching Brief Areas and Test Pit Section

## **SUMMARY**

During April and May 2013 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the alteration and extension to No. 33 Northbrook Street, Newbury (NGR: SU 4709 6742). The work was commissioned by Jeeves Investment Partner Ltd. in response to an archaeological condition requiring an archaeological watching brief during the redevelopment works.

The groundworks did not penetrate through the Post-medieval/Modern make-up layers present within the footprint of the existing building and no contexts or artefactual materials clearly pre-dating the Post-medieval period were present within the watched areas. However, it is possible that Medieval deposits could be preserved at a greater depth within the study area.

## **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.

### *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 circa AD 1500 onwards.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 During April and May 2013 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the alteration and extension of 33 Northbrook Street, Newbury, West Berkshire (NGR: SU 4709 6742). The work was commissioned by Jeeves Investment Partner Ltd in response to an archaeological condition (Condition 7) requiring archaeological monitoring during the redevelopment works.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2012), which conformed to the principles set out in National Planning Policy Framework 2012, the archaeological policies of West Berkshire Council and the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological monitoring.

## **2 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Planning permission (Ref. 12/01956/FULD) has been granted by West Berkshire Council for the alteration and extension of 33 Northbrook Street, Newbury (NGR: SU 4709 6742). Condition 7 attached to the consent required a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording to be implemented, in line with the approach set out in Paragraph 141 of the NPPF.
- 2.2 In regard to this development the Council's Archaeological Officer noted that the application falls in a sensitive archaeological location, in the centre of the historic town and close to the street frontage. Medieval and later deposits are known to survive along the rear of Northbrook Street, as demonstrated by the Park Way development (Oxford Archaeology, 2005 & 2008) and it was concluded that a watching brief was the most appropriate archaeological mitigation.
- 2.3 Cartographic evidence clearly demonstrates that the site lies in an area of burgage plot, which would have had an origin in the Medieval period. Development of the rear part of the burgage plot may have taken place during the 15th-17th centuries, with the expansion of the cloth and wool industries in Newbury and the area is known to have been predominantly commercial since the mid-19th century.
- 2.4 Archaeological work, including evaluation in 2005 and 2008 and subsequent targeted excavation areas in 2008 (report forthcoming) by Oxford Archaeology, has been undertaken in the vicinity of the site. Limited excavation on the street frontage near No. 33 recovered some fragments of Medieval pottery and a possible rammed chalk floor. Excavations in this area however, were of limited depth.

- 2.5 Evaluation work in 2005 (Trenches 4, 6 and 7, Oxford Archaeology, 2005) to the rear of No's 28 and 30-31 revealed deep stratigraphy to a depth of 3m-4m below the existing ground level. The earliest stratigraphical context was the river gravels, which did not contain artefactual evidence, these gravels were overlain by a thick layer of peat, 1.4m thick. The peats were overlain by 11th/12th century marshland reclamation layers and some areas of domestic dumping of a similar date. In Trench 4, the 11th/12th century dumping layers were overlain by a flint and gravel yard surface, which was overlain by Modern layers. In Trench 6, the 12th century marshland reclamation layer was overlain by a possible layer of 16th century garden soil and 16th century dumping/levelling/demolition layers. The peats were cut by a large pit of 15th century date in Trench 7, which was indicative of waste from a tanning works and a line of stake holes may have indicated a burgage plot boundary. These deposits were overlain by undated levelling/dumping layers which probably represented late landscaping of the area, beneath Modern layers.
- 2.6 The study area therefore contained the potential for archaeological finds predominantly dating to the Medieval period, particularly beneath the 1920's and 1970's extensions. This however did not prejudice the watching brief against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

### **3 AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological 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; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. This was intended to allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed works.
- 3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the objectives as stated below.
- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
  - ii) to attempt to characterize 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.

3.3 A specific aim of the project should be to address the research questions stated in the Newbury Historic Character Study (West Berkshire Council, 2006) This is:

i) is there surviving evidence for Medieval occupation/activity revealed during sub-surface excavations?

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

4.1 All intrusive groundworks were to be monitored and recorded in order to identify archaeological finds and deposits and these groundworks were to be carried out under the constant monitoring of an archaeologist. However, during the course of project the groundworkers did not inform Foundations Archaeology prior to the excavation of three footing trenches (see Figure 3) as they “didn’t want to waste our time as they would only be digging through the make-up layer”, these trenches were concreted before they could be monitored. In order to mitigate this, Sarah Orr, the acting Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council requested the excavation of a test pit in the location of the footings to test the stratigraphy of this area. The results of this test pit were negative and it was decided, in consultation with Sarah Orr, that further monitoring of the site was not necessary.

4.2 Spoil tips were visually scanned for unstratified finds.

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

#### **5 RESULTS**

5.1 During the course of the watching brief the excavation of a manhole and a pipe trench were monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. All three footing trenches were excavated and concreted without an archaeologist being present and it was subsequently decided that a test pit would be dug in their location in order to determine the stratigraphy of that area (see Figure 3).

5.2 Prior to all excavation the concrete floor (between 0.2 and 0.3m thick) present within the footprint of the existing building was removed.

5.3 The depths of each excavated area varied slightly. The manhole was 1m by 1m in plan and excavated to a depth of 0.4m, the pipe trench was 0.4m wide and 0.3m deep and the test pit was 1m by 1m and up to 0.8m deep. All excavation depths were taken below the level of the concrete floor.

5.4 As the stratigraphy of the site was similar across the entire watched area, this report will discuss the site generally as a whole, rather than discussing each excavated area individually.



- 5.4.1 The earliest identified layer in the watched area was present within the test pit and was only partially excavated. This was a dark brown/black gritty soil (107), which was over 0.22m thick and contained occasional charcoal lumps, one fragment of oyster shell and fragments of Post-medieval CBM. This was sealed by a dark brown gritty soil (106), up to 0.13m thick, which contained frequent fragments of Post-medieval CBM throughout. This was overlaid by a dark brown gritty soil (105), up to 0.10m thick, with very frequent large flint nodules present throughout the matrix. This was then sealed by a white beige mortar (104), up to 0.09m thick, which contained frequent fragments of Post-medieval CBM and flint inclusions. This was overlaid by a layer of Modern crushed brick (103), up to 0.12m thick, which was sealed by a pink grit and stone hardcore (102), up to 0.14m thick and then sealed by a Modern grit and pebble hardcore (101), up to 0.15m thick.
- 5.4.2 With the exception of Post-medieval/Modern CBM and brick, the only artefactual evidence present within the watched areas was a single fragment of oyster shell.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 No contexts or artefactual material clearly pre-dating the Post-medieval period were present within the watched areas. The only datable material recovered was Post-medieval/Modern CBM.
- 6.2 The groundworks did not penetrate through the Post-medieval make-up layers, therefore there is still the potential for Medieval deposits to be present at a greater depth.
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the West Berkshire Museum under Accession Code NEBYM:2013.46. An OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Foundations Archaeology, 2012, *33 Northbrook Street, Newbury, Berkshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished.

IfA, 2008, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Institute for Archaeologists, Reading.

Oxford Archaeology, 2005, *Park Way Phase 1 Evaluation: Archaeological Evaluation Report*.

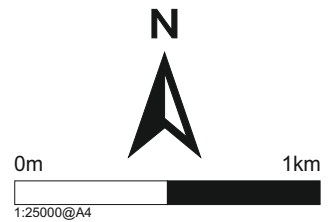
Oxford Archaeology, 2008, Park Way Phase 1 Evaluation: Archaeological Evaluation Report.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

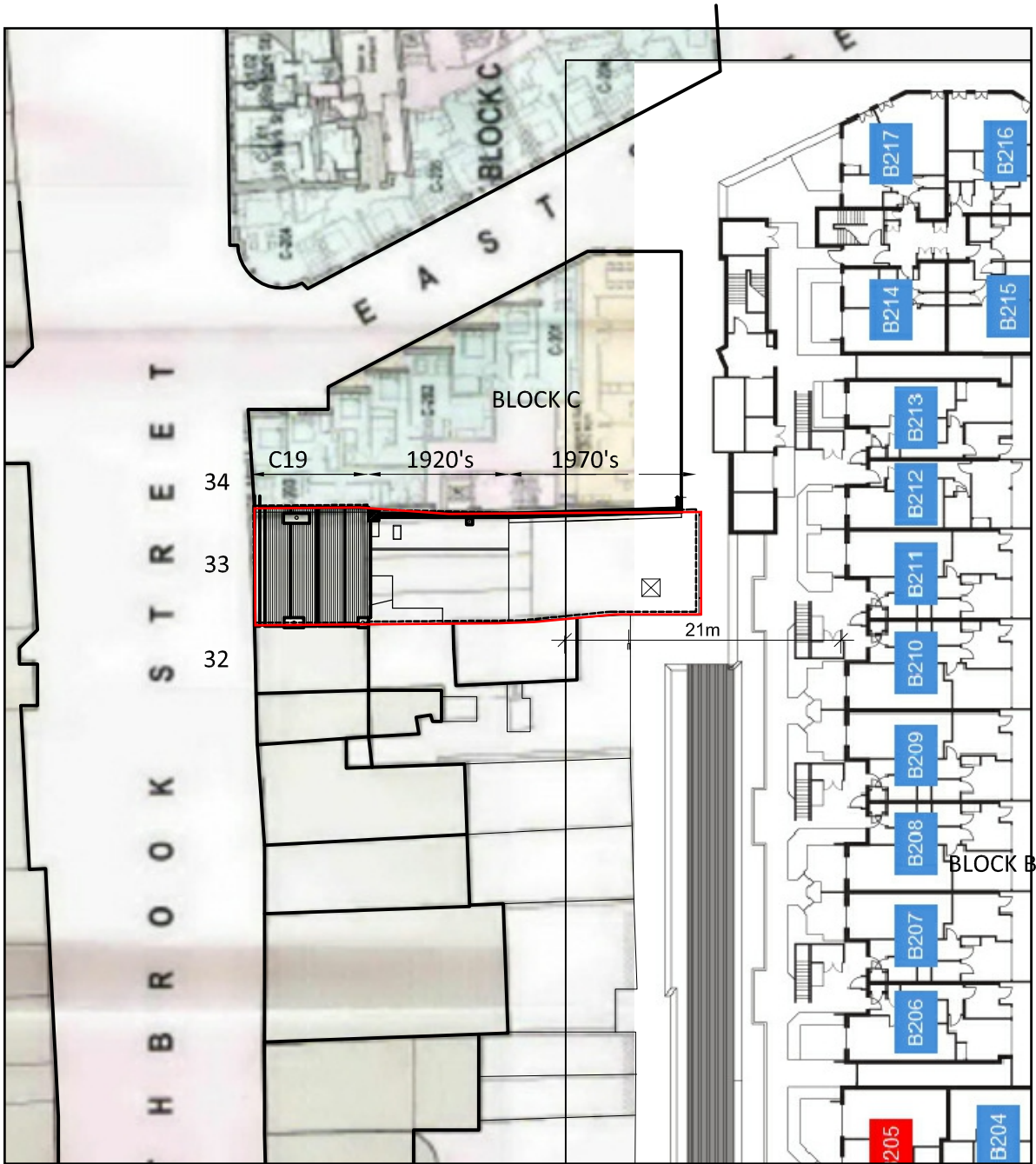
Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Sarah Orr of West Berkshire Council and the on-site ground workers for their help during the course of this project.



© Crown Copyright  
Reproduced under licence 100015722  
**Site Code: NSN12**  
**Accession Code: NEBYM:2013.46**



**FIGURE 1: Site Location**



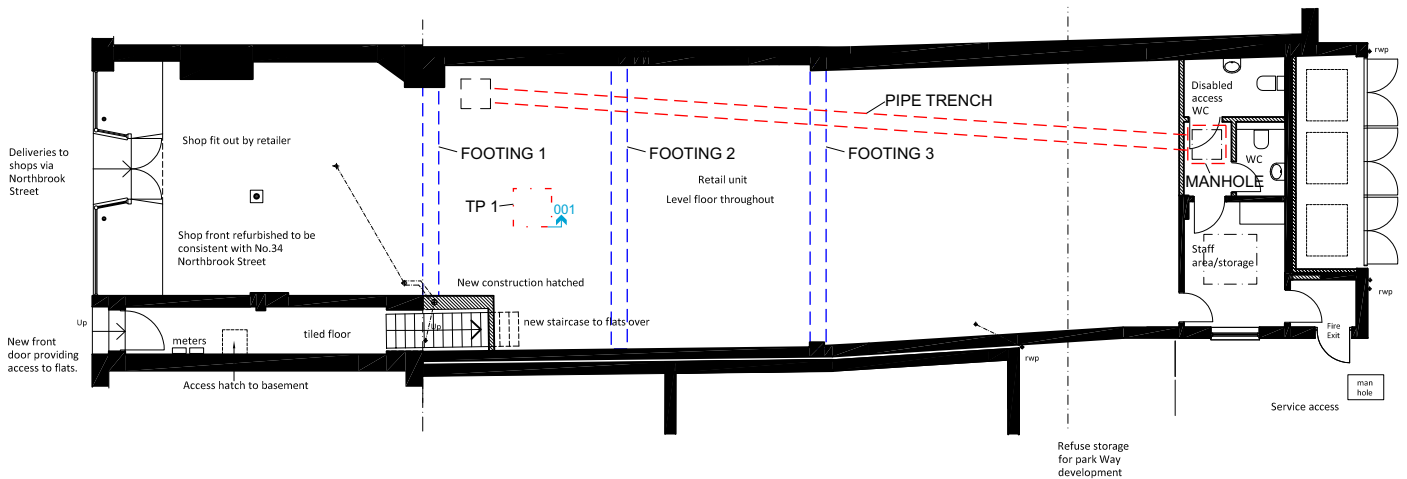
Site Code: NSN12  
 Accession Code: NEBYM:2013.46



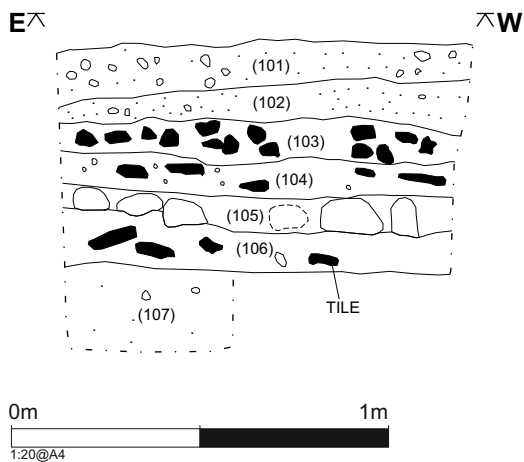
— SITE



**FIGURE 2: Site Area**



**001: NORTH FACING SECTION TEST PIT 1**



**Site Code: NSN12**  
**Accession Code: NEBYM:2013.46**

N

MONITORED AREAS

UNMONITORED AREAS

0m 10m

1:200@A4

**FIGURE 3: Watching Brief Areas and Test Pit Section**