

**118 BATH ROAD,  
THATCHAM,  
BERKSHIRE.**

**NGR: SU 508 675**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

December 2008  
Report No. 618

**Quality Assurance**

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

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## **SUMMARY**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken between December 2006 and September 2007 by Foundations Archaeology on land to the rear of 118 Bath Road, Thatcham, Berkshire (NGR: SU 508 675).

The archaeological works comprised the monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of an extension to the present building, along with the creation of a parking area.

No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present within the investigation 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.

### *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.* 600 BC; *Iron Age* – *c.* 600 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.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Between December 2006 and September 2007 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of 118 Bath Road, Thatcham, Berkshire (NGR: SU 508 675). The work was commissioned by Jayne Lawrence of The Dental Art Clinic.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2006), 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 archaeological policies of West Berkshire Council.
- 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 SITE LOCATION**

- 2.1 The study area is located to the west of the centre of Thatcham and to the north of the River Kennet (Figure 1). The underlying natural deposits comprise river terrace gravels.

## **3 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Planning permission, with an archaeological watching brief condition attached, has been granted for the construction of a rear extension to the present building, along with an associated parking area (Planning Application No. 06/0088/FUL).
- 3.2 The site is located in an area of high archaeological potential. Numerous archaeological finds and features associated with a probable Iron Age/Romano-British settlement along the line of the present A4 are known from the vicinity.
- 3.3 The study area therefore contained the potential for archaeological finds predominantly dating to the Prehistoric and Roman periods. This in no way prejudiced the monitoring works against the recovery of finds or features relating to other periods.

## **4 AIMS**

- 4.1 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.

4.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the WSI (Foundations Archaeology 2006).

i) to define, identify and record any 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.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The monitored works comprised the excavation of foundation and service trenches, along with topsoil stripping in the proposed parking area (Figure 2). The groundworks were undertaken by use of a mechanical excavator, under archaeological supervision. When features or deposits of potential archaeological significance were noted, they were closely examined, defined, manually excavated (where appropriate) and recorded. Spoil heaps were visually scanned for artefacts.

## 6 RESULTS

6.1 **Foundation/service trenches:** The trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.78m below the modern ground surface. The natural gravel deposits were sealed by context (101), up to 0.78m thick, which comprised a dark brown clay silt/gravel, with occasional charcoal flecks. Deposit (101) was overlaid by context (102), up to 0.30m thick, which comprised a soil and brick rubble layer, with frequent modern artefacts. Layer (102) was sealed by a lens of pea-gravel (103), up to 0.08m thick, which was, in turn, overlaid by tarmac (104), up to 0.09m thick. No archaeological features or artefacts were present within the excavated trenches.

6.2 **Parking area:** The parking area was excavated to a maximum of 0.30m below modern ground surface. Context (105) formed the only excavated deposit, which comprised soil and brick rubble, with frequent modern artefacts. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present within the excavated area.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 No archaeological features or artefacts were present within the investigated area. The archaeological watching brief has, however, identified the potential for relatively good preservation conditions to exist below modern rubble deposits.
- 7.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the appropriate museum. A short note will be submitted for publication a local journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

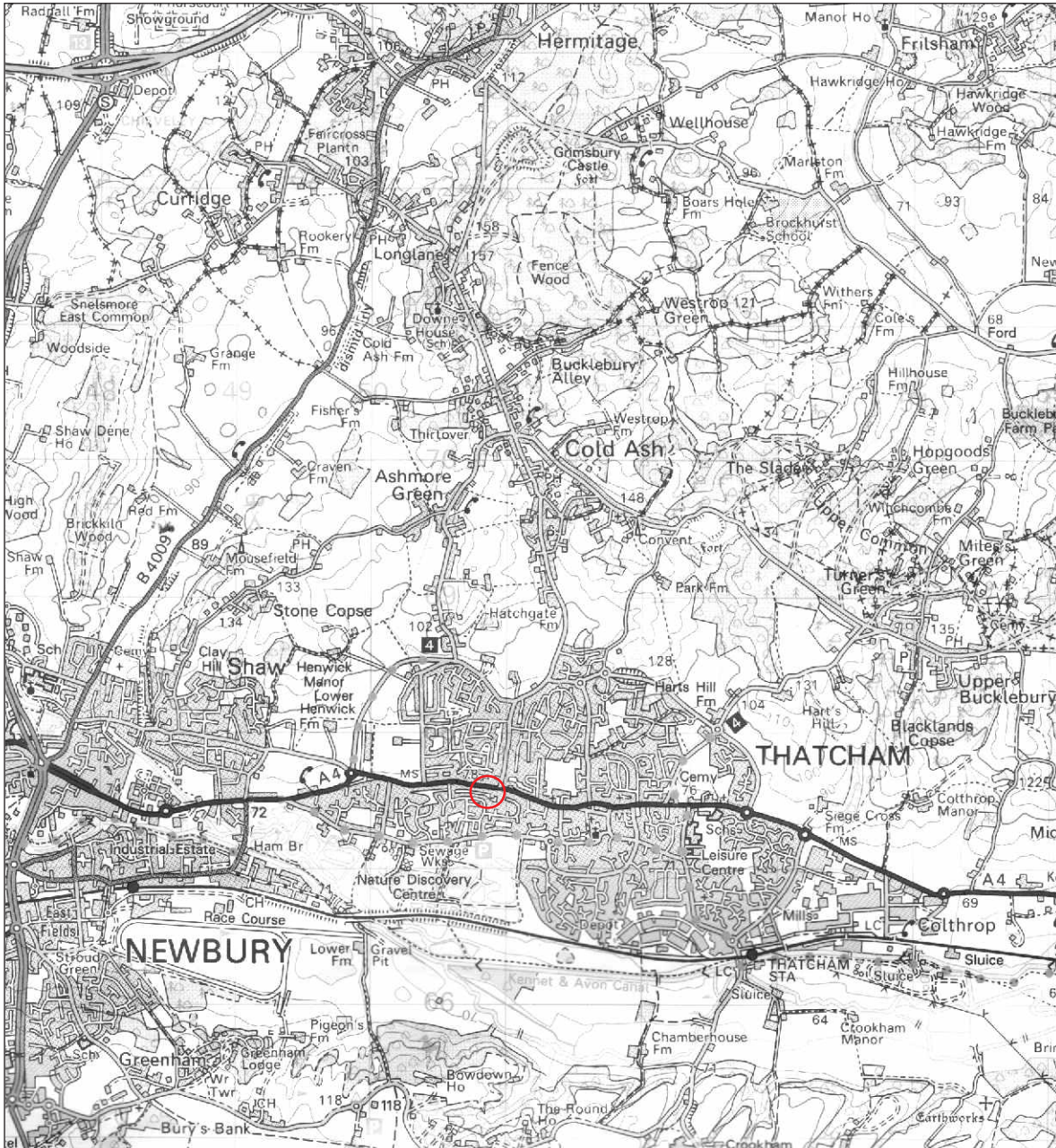
## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Foundations Archaeology. 2006. *118 Bath Road, Thatcham, Berkshire: Archaeological Watching Brief: Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished.

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

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

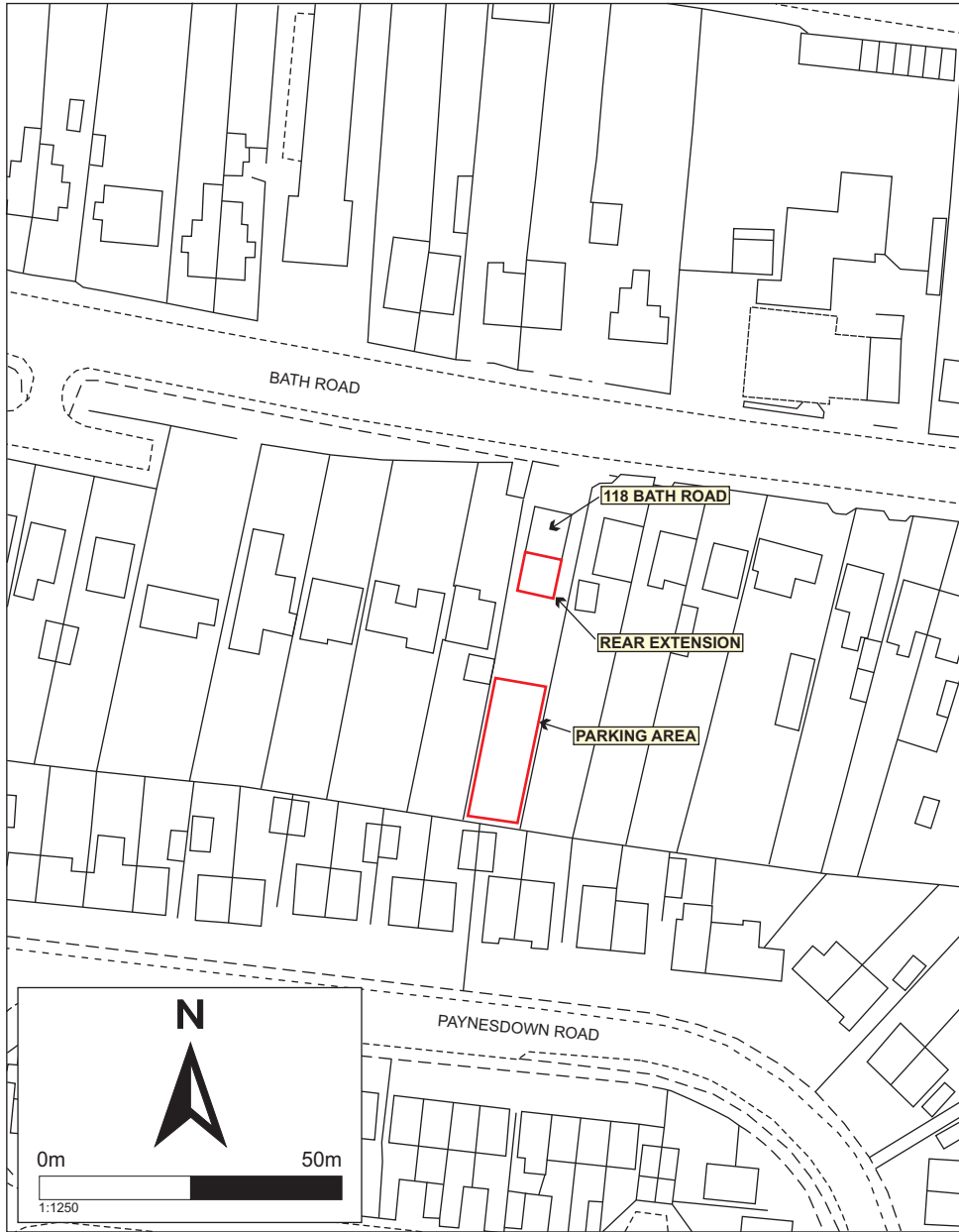
Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Jayne Lawrence of The Dental Art Clinic and Duncan Coe of West Berkshire Council for their assistance during the course of this project.



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FIGURE 1: Site Location





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**FIGURE 2: Site Plan**