

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Land at 18 Winterbrook,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Pierre-Damien Manisse**

**Site Code: WWO22/56**

**(SU 6046 8831)**

# **Land at 18 Winterbrook, Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Beechcroft Developments Ltd**

by Pierre-Damien Manisse  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WWO 22/58

**September 2022**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at 18 Winterbrook, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 6046 8831

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 1st September 2022

**Project coordinator:** Danielle Milbank

**Site supervisor:** Pierre-Damien Manisse

**Site code:** WWO 22/58

**Area of site:** c. 038ha

**Summary of results:** Four trenches were opened with some modifications from the original layout due to services, tree protection and need for machine access. Despite the area's high archaeological potential, no archaeological deposits nor finds of interest were found. Based on these results the archaeological potential in this specific area is considered to be low.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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# Land at 18 Winterbrook, Wallingford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Report 22/58

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 18 Winterbrook, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 9EF (SU 6046 8831) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mike Bowman of Beechcroft Developments Ltd, 1 Church Lane, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 0DX.

A planning application (P21/S1415/FUL) has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council for a new housing development in place of a former nursing home. The consent is subject to two conditions (22 and 23) which require the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in this case to take the form, initially of, trial trenching, the results of which would inform any requirement for further work.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021) and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Steven Weaver, planning archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council the archaeological adviser for the District. A brief had been prepared by him (Weaver 2021). The fieldwork was undertaken by Pierre-Damien Manisse, on 1st September 2022 and the site code is WWO 22/58. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located off Reading Road, at 18 Winterbrook, an area just beyond the south fringe of the historic town of Wallingford and site of the former Winterbrook Nursing Home. It comprises gardens, a Tarmacadamed car park, paved or slabbed areas and several buildings. The site is now abandoned but the existing structures have not yet been demolished. The River Thames flows less than 300m to the east. The site is relatively flat at 46m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). It is bordered by residential properties on three sides and by the Reading Road to the east (Fig. 2). The underlying geology as shown on maps (BGS 1980) is recorded as 1st (Flood Plain) Terrace deposits.

## **Archaeological background**

The site's archaeological potential has been summarized in the project design brief (Weaver 2021), on which the following is based. In general terms, the site lies in the archaeologically rich area of the Upper Thames Valley where numerous sites have been recorded from the air, gravel extraction and other fieldwork in the area (Booth *et al.* 2007, Lambrick *et al.* 2009; Benson and Miles 1974). This includes levelled round barrows preserved in the form of ring ditches, a hengiform monument interpreted as a Neolithic ceremonial site and an Early Iron Age settlement (Lewis 2009) developing to the west and north. Extensive activity from the Bronze Age, Middle and Late Iron Age are also known, as well as a Saxon settlement. To the east there is a rich Bronze Age site considered as a possible *emporium* on the riverside with a wharf or bridge excavated (Cromarty *et al.* 2006).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development, without compromising their integrity.

More specifically, the research aims of this project are:

to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;

to determine if any deposits of Bronze Age, Iron Age or Saxon are present comparable to the deposits of these dates present to the north, south-west and east; and to

provide information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary

It was proposed to open four trenches, each 20m long and 1.8m wide under constant archaeological supervision. Any relevant feature or deposit was to be hand cleaned and sufficiently sampled to satisfy the objectives of the project. Spoil heaps were to be monitored and a metal detector used to enhance finds recovery. The CIfA (2020) recommendations for an archaeological evaluation were to be followed. Any results would be appraised in regards to current research agendas (HE 2016), or more local and thematic concerns (Hey and Hind 2014).

## **Results (Figs 3-4; Pls 1-3)**

A 360° tracked excavator was used, equipped with a toothless bucket. Compared to the intended trench locations some adjustments had to be made (Fig. 3). Trench 4 could not be opened in its intended position because of restricted access, so it was relocated to the front. Trench 3 had to be moved due to the presence of an active main sewer. It was repositioned in the south-east corner. The existence of several live services and tree protection zones limited adjustments in terms of the implementation of the trenches and so most of the trenches were

necessarily shorter than intended although trench 2 was lengthened in compensation. The spoil heaps were monitored for artefacts, and a metal detector was used but without results. The weather and light conditions were considered to be good during the fieldwork but the ground was very dry.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The lowest deposits encountered were river gravels, the expected geology. These were sealed by an orange brown clay deposit, generally thin, totally sterile and also considered as geological. This was the level followed in all trenches. All trenches were dug into garden turf.

#### Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned SE - NW and was 14.50m long and 0.55 to 0.75m deep. The ground level was at 46.3m aOD. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of a made ground layer (dark brown clayey silt with occasional gravels), above 0.25m of a second made ground (dark grey silt with occasional unsorted stones). Both had inclusions such as concrete, plastic, brick fragments, etc. These made ground layers overlie the top geological horizon, orange brown clay, only 0.05m thick at the NW end but 0.25m thick at the SE, with the gravels directly under it. A modern test pit was seen towards the SE end, filled with light yellow sand and gravel. No finds were recovered.

#### Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned ESE – WNW and was 22.20m long and up to 0.90m deep. The ground level was at 46.5m aOD. The upper layer at the ESE end was a dark brown clayey silt, 0.35m thick that initially appeared to be a topsoil with frequent roots, but at 2m from that end was more clearly a made ground with inclusions as above. It directly overlies the top natural geology. Further west the made ground's depth increased from 0.35m to 0.40m, on top of geology. The clay was present up to 0.82m below ground level, level at which the gravels were seen. A test pit was made at the eastern end to confirm that this was the natural geology. At 4m from the ESE end there was a massive truncation related to a modern soakaway. No finds were recovered.

#### Trench 3 (Pl. 2)

Trench 3 was aligned SW - NE and was 17.20m long and about 0.50m deep. The ground level was 45.9m aOD. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil grading into made ground towards the NE with flecks of ceramic building material. It directly overlies the natural sterile orange brown clay with lighter patches, 0.42m deep onto the top of the gravels. A modern test slot was seen towards the SW end. No finds were recovered.

#### Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

Trench 4 was aligned ESE - WNW and was 14.20m long and 0.55m to 1m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of a number of made ground layers overlying natural geology, increasing in depth from east to west (towards the existing care home). At 10m from ESE end, it showed 0.35m of a brown grey made ground, over 0.20m of a dark grey made ground, overlying 0.15m of a brown made ground with common stone inclusions, brick fragments and charcoal flecks. The layer below, about 0.10m deep, was probably more of a disturbed interface with the natural rather than a made ground. The brown clay geology appeared here at 0.80m below ground level. No finds were recovered.

### **Finds**

Only modern finds were noted in the made ground layers, and not retained.

### **Conclusion**

Though the primary trench location plan was modified, it was still possible to open four trenches to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site. They all proved to be negative and based on these results the site's archaeological potential is low.

### **References**

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## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at SW, ESE or SE end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	14.50	1.60	0.50 to 0.75	0-0.25m made ground, 0.25-0.50 made ground; 0.50+ natural geology (mid brown silty clay overlaying gravels). <b>[Pl. 1]</b>
2	22.20	1.60	0.75 to 0.90	0-0.55/0.75m made grounds 0.55/0.75m+ natural geology.
3	17.20	1.60	0.50	0-0.35 topsoil (dark grey clayey silt) or made ground, 0.35m+ natural geology. <b>[Pl. 2]</b>
4	14.20	1.60	0.55	0-0.35m made ground, 0.35-0.55/0.70m made ground, 0.55/0.70m+ natural geology <b>[Pl. 3]</b>





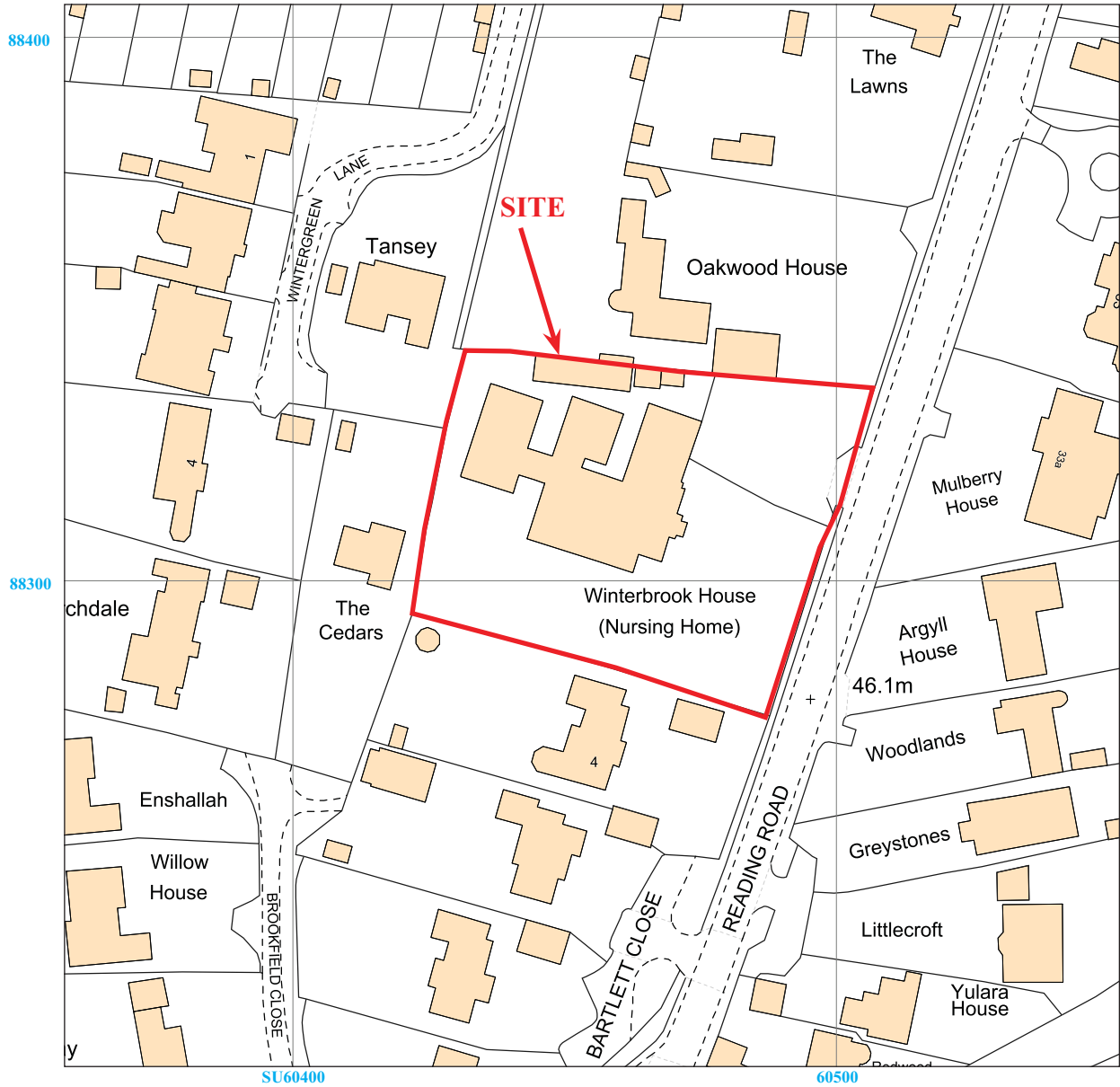
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wallingford and Oxfordshire.

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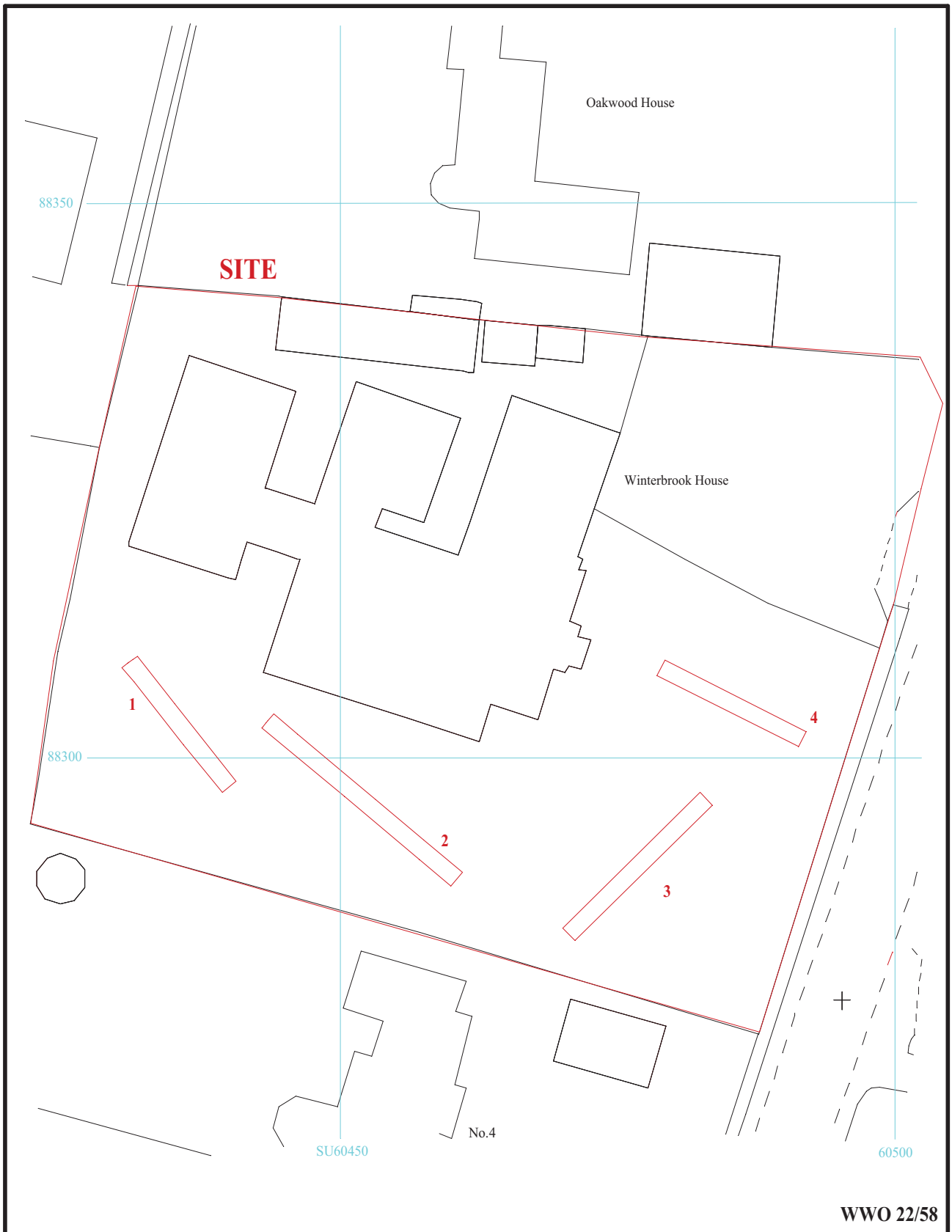
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Reading Road.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



*Trench 1*

46.3m aOD  
^

SE

NW

Made Ground

Made Ground

Top geological horizon (clay)  
Gravels

*Trench 4*

45.7m aOD  
^

ESE

WNW

Made Ground

Made Ground

Made Ground

Interface with natural geology  
Top geological horizon (clay)

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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking North West,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking North East,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 3. Trench 4, looking West South West,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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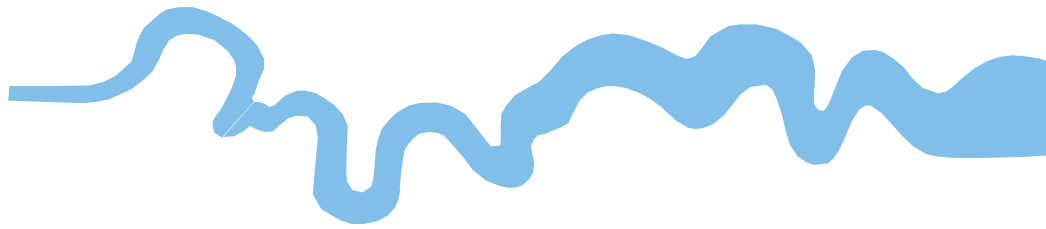
**Land at 18 Winterbrook, Wallingford,  
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Plates 1 to 3.**

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## TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





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