

**15 Wellington Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Warching Brief

by Richard Oram and Danielle Colls

Site Code WAR06/24

(SU 7291 7159)

**15 Wellington Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Groom Estates Limited**

by Richard Oram and Danielle Colls
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WAR 06/24

March 2006

Summary

Site name: 15 Wellington Avenue, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7291 7159

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 6th–9th March 2006

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Richard Oram

Site code: WAR 06/24

Summary of results: No deposits or finds of archaeological interest were observed.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 17.03.06 Steve Preston✓ 20.03.06
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**15 Wellington Avenue, Reading, Berkshire
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

By Richard Oram and Danielle Colls

Report 06/24

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at land at 15 Wellington Avenue, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7291 7159) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mark Groom of The Keen Partnership, The Courtyard, Edinburgh Road, Reading RG30 2UA on behalf of Groom Estates Ltd.

Planning consent (05/00864/FUL/LC) has been granted by Reading Borough Council to construct a three-bedroom detached property on this site. This consent is subject to a condition (12) relating to archaeology, which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Thomason, Archaeological Officer at Berkshire Archaeology, who advise the Borough on matters of archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Oram and Danielle Colls on the 6th, 7th and 9th March 2006 and the site code is WAR 06/24.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the junction of Wellington Avenue and Northcourt Avenue, on the western side of Shinfield Road, which is situated in the outskirts of Reading to the south of the town centre (Fig. 2). At the time of the work, the site consisted of a garden plot. The site lies on an area of London Clay with gravel outcrops and on the boundary of two of the higher river terraces of the Thames (BGS 1946). An orange clay with occasional gravel patches was observed in the footing trenches. The site was relatively level at c. 60m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site is derived from its location near a Bronze Age circular enclosure recorded at Marshall's Hill. The nature of this settlement is obscure but it may be of high status (Bradley 1984,

121). Further to the north at Addington Road, a Late Bronze Age pit and a hoard of Iron Age currency bars were recorded (Ford in prep). However an evaluation closer to the site, at Northumberland Avenue, failed to locate any archaeological deposits (Saunders 2000).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the project were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which would be damaged or destroyed by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of the foundation trenches and any service trenches or soakaways dug to archaeologically relevant layers. An area between the house footprint and Wellington Avenue was to be stripped of topsoil but following examination of the foundation trenches, it was determined that this stripping would not expose the archaeologically relevant levels beneath the subsoil.

Results

Foundation trenches excavated during this project (Fig. 3) were 0.65m wide and *c.* 1m deep overall. A section of the west side trenching *c.* 7.0m long and 1.75m wide was dug to a greater depth (1.75m) in order to provide greater stability for the foundations, due to the presence of a nearby fruit tree which was to be retained (Fig. 4). The stratigraphy revealed showed topsoil of variable thickness 0.05m to 0.20m deep overlying an orange/brown silty subsoil 0.40m thick, overlying orange (with some grey mottling) clay with occasional patches of orange gravel in the base of the trenches. It is possible that this is some form of solifluction deposit overlying the London Clay proper. No archaeological deposits were observed in any part of the foundation trenches nor finds recovered.

A soakaway and its associated drainage trenches was monitored towards the rear of the site. The soakaway was *c.* 3m deep and 2m across. The stratigraphy revealed comprised 0.3m of topsoil overlying 0.15m of subsoil above clay natural. These observations revealed a similar stratigraphy and did not reveal any archaeological deposits nor finds.

Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered during the watching brief, however some modern brick and tile fragments were observed in the subsoil; these were not retained.

Conclusion

The observed groundworks did not encounter any archaeological deposits or finds of archaeological interest.

References

- Bradley, R J, 1984, *The social foundations of prehistoric Britain*, London
BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 268, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
Ford, S, in prep, 'A Late Bronze Age pit and hoard of Iron Age currency bars at Addington Road, Reading',
(*Berks Archaeol J*)
Saunders, M J, 2000, 'Land adjacent to 2 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berkshire; an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 00/06, Reading



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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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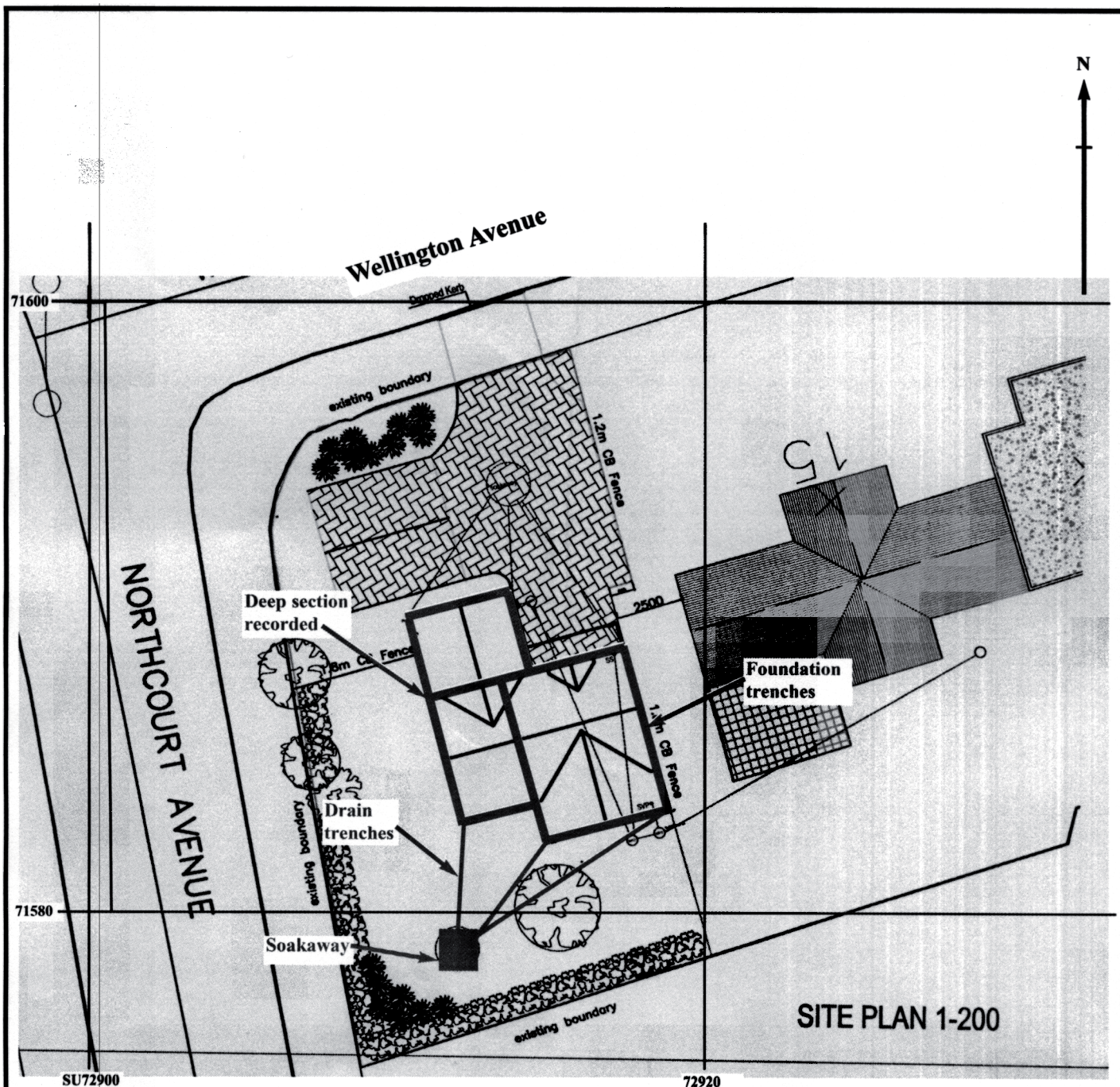
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Wellington Avenue.

Scale: 1:1250

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Figure 3. Detailed location of watching brief.

Scale: 1:200

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Figure 4. Representative section of footing trench.