

Charters, Charters Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief (Phase 2)

For Trant Construction

by Sean Wallis and Simon Cass

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CSB05/105

May 2006

Summary

Site name: Charters, Charters Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire (Phase 2)

Grid reference: SU 9397 6726

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 3rd April to 8th May 2006

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: CSB05/105

Area of site: 0.99ha

Summary of results: No archaeological finds or features were located during this phase of work

Monuments identified: None

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

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	Steve Preston ✓ 16.05.06

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Report 05/105b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Charters, Charters Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire (SU 9397 6726) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Andrew Ewins, of MMDS, 21B The Borough, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7NF, on behalf of Trant Construction.

Planning permission has been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the demolition of some existing structures on the site, and the construction of new buildings with associated access roads. This is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which requires that the site be investigated during groundworks in two phases. The first phase, a field evaluation, was carried out by TVAS in October 2005 (Oram 2005) and is discussed further below. This document reports on the second phase, which comprises a watching brief to monitor areas of topsoil and overburden removal prior to ground disturbance.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Royal Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona MacDonald, Principal Archaeologist for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Royal Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sean Wallis, Andy Taylor and Sarah Coles in April and May 2006, and the site code is CSB05/105. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

A desk-based assessment of the site was carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology and summarized in a written scheme of investigation prepared by Broadway Malyan (Aldsworth 2005). It concluded that an area proposed for building A and its associated access road, to the west of the listed 1930s building (Fig. 3) would already have been extensively disturbed during the construction of the existing buildings and that 'the appropriate archaeological response here should be a watching brief during earthmoving operations associated with demolition and construction' (Aldsworth 2005, 1).

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the west of Sunningdale immediately south of the Reading to London Waterloo railway line, and north of the A30 (Fig. 2). It comprises an irregular parcel of land which slopes down moderately from

the north (approximately 80m above Ordnance Datum) to the south (50m AOD) and is currently occupied by a number of houses and a large landscaped garden. The underlying geology is Bracklesham Beds (BGS 1981).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a brief prepared by Broadway Malyan (Aldsworth 2005), which drew upon the results of an earlier desk-based assessment (Carew 2005). In summary, the site lies within an area with a modest range of recorded archaeological deposits (Ford 1987), perhaps as a result of relatively few opportunities for the discovery of archaeological material in this former heathland-dominated landscape. A number of Bronze Age round barrows are recorded and contemporary occupation must also be present but is as yet unlocated. Roman archaeology is also known, with the road from Silchester to London passing to the south, and at least one villa-type site discovered during construction of the railway in the 19th century (Hughes 1890). There is a possibility of further Roman deposits in the environs.

An archaeological field evaluation was carried out in October 2005, as Phase one of the current project. This focussed on an area to the north-east of that covered by the current watching brief (Fig. 2) but failed to reveal any archaeological finds or features (Oram 2005).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved supervision of topsoil and overburden removal in areas defined in the Scheme of Investigation as areas A and C (i.e., the area covered in Figure 3). Sufficient time was allowed, within the groundworker's schedules, to excavate and record any archaeological deposits revealed. Five visits were made to the site over the course of the project, timed to coincide with the stripping of the relevant areas of interest identified previously.

Results

The various areas excavated during this phase truncated the ground to depths of up to 2.2m but were generally between 0.4 and 0.6m deep. The overburden was removed using a 360° machine fitted with a ditching bucket to expose the natural geology, under archaeological supervision. The general stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.30–0.35m of disturbed topsoil and subsoil on top of either orange/yellow sandy clay or sand and gravel to the final depth of truncation in that area. The area under the previous road heading southwards was noted as having

thick Tarmac (0.5m) and concrete (0.4m) deposits on top of the natural sandy clay and it was in this area that the deepest excavation seen was undertaken. The south-eastern part of the site was found to be heavily disturbed by modern events, for example the prior demolition of buildings. The presence of several manholes and services was also noted on the northern periphery of this southern area, causing further truncation.

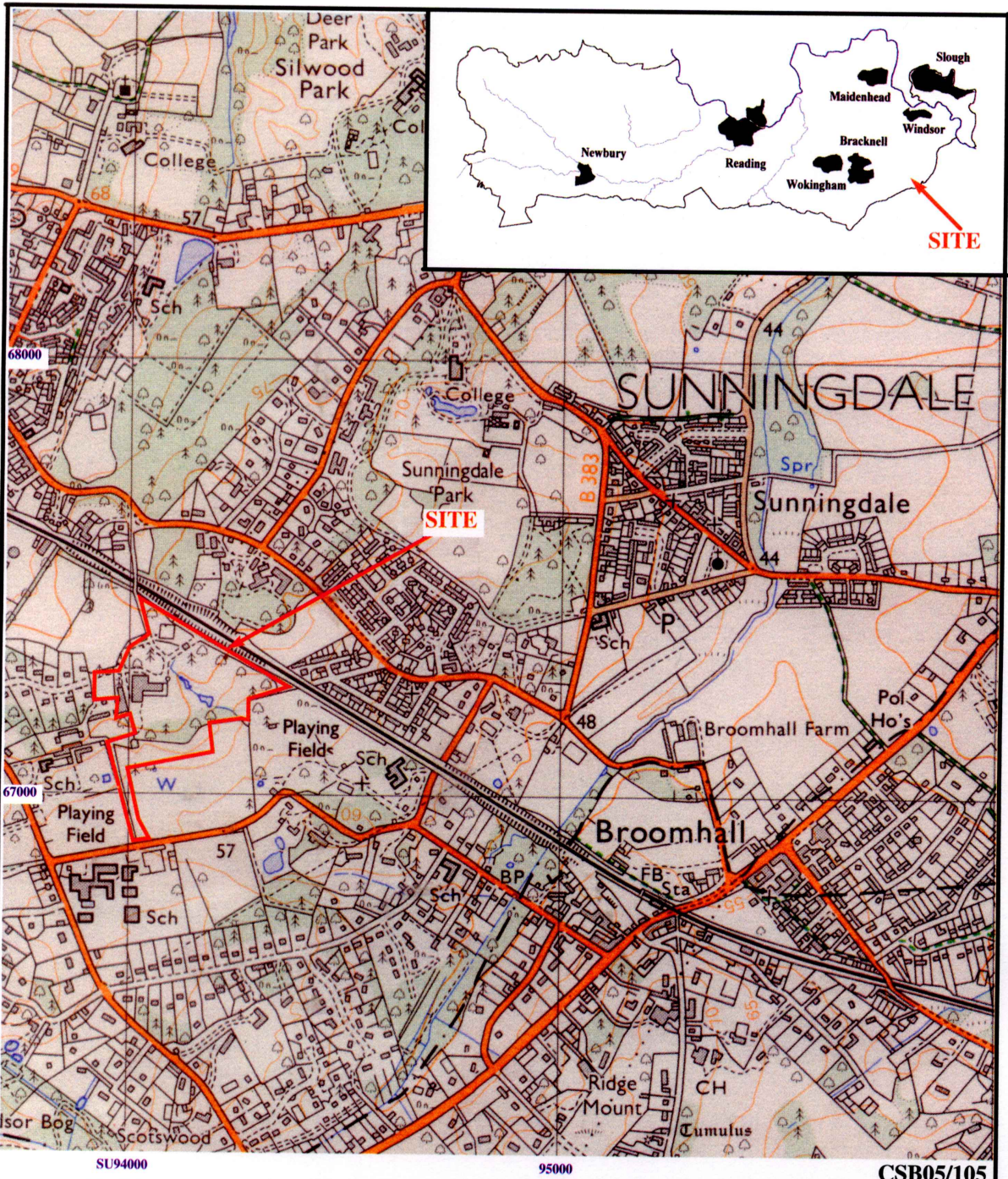
However, in areas that had not been truncated or disturbed, where visibility was good, no archaeological finds or features were seen.

Conclusion

No archaeological finds or features were found during the groundworks observed here. Moderately large areas of truncation and modern disturbance were noted for the southern portion of the site which could have led to the removal of archaeological deposits if originally present. However, the northern area was less truncated, but was similarly devoid of archaeology, as had already been noted during the evaluation.

References

- Aldsworth, F, 2005, 'Written Scheme of Investigation for Charters, Sunningdale, Berkshire', Broadway Malyan, Weybridge
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- Carew, T, 2005, 'An archaeological desk-based assessment at Charters, Charters Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire', Pre-Construct Archaeology, London
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Department of Highways and Planning Occas Paper 1, Reading
- Hughes, G M, 1890, *History of Windsor Forest and Sunninghill and the Great Park*
- Oram, R, 2005, 'Charters, Charters Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire, an Archaeological Evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 05/105, Reading
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**Charters, Charters Road, Sunningdale,
Berkshire, 2006, Phase 2
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Sunningdale and Berkshire.

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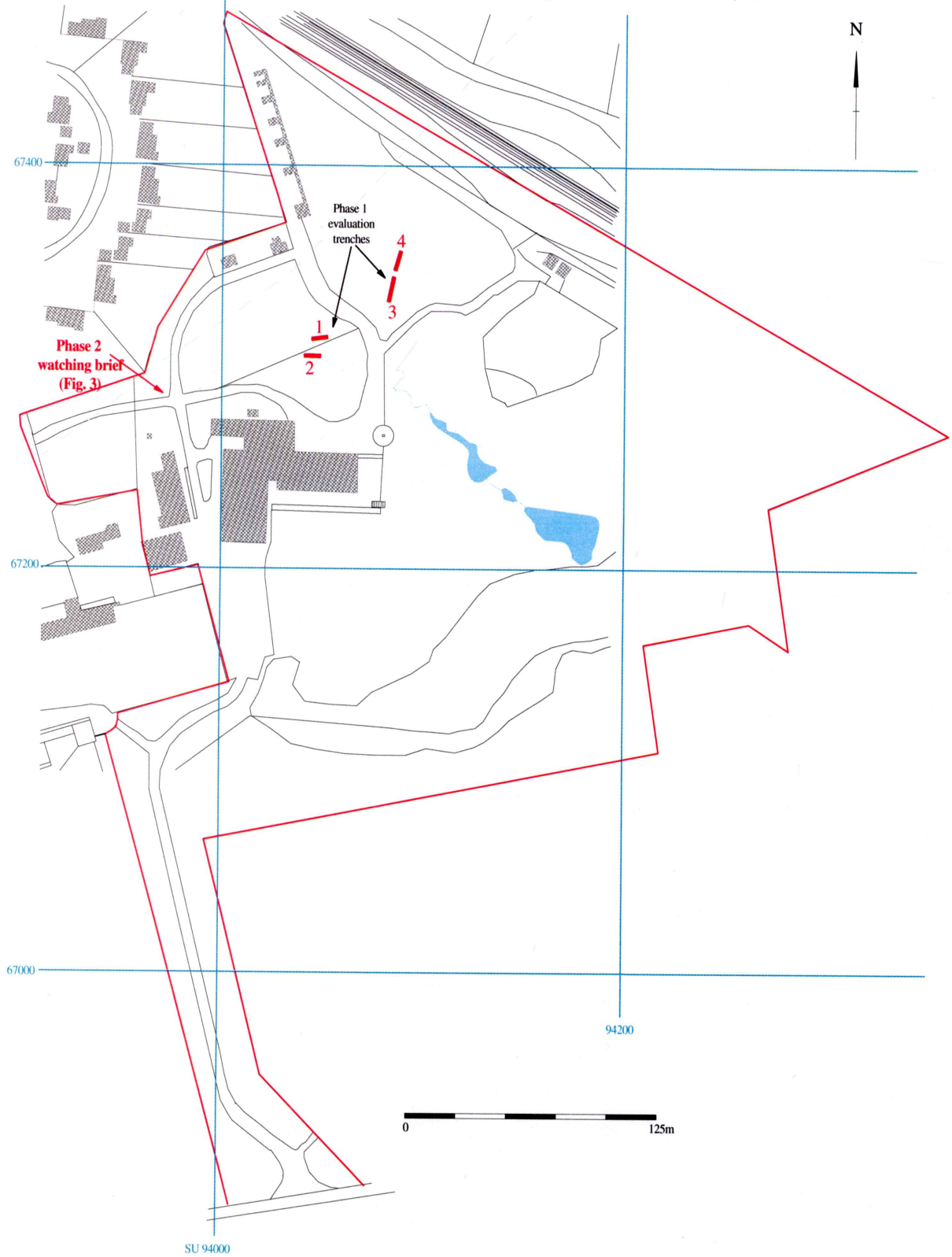


Figure 2. Location of site showing watching brief area and phase 1 evaluation trenches.

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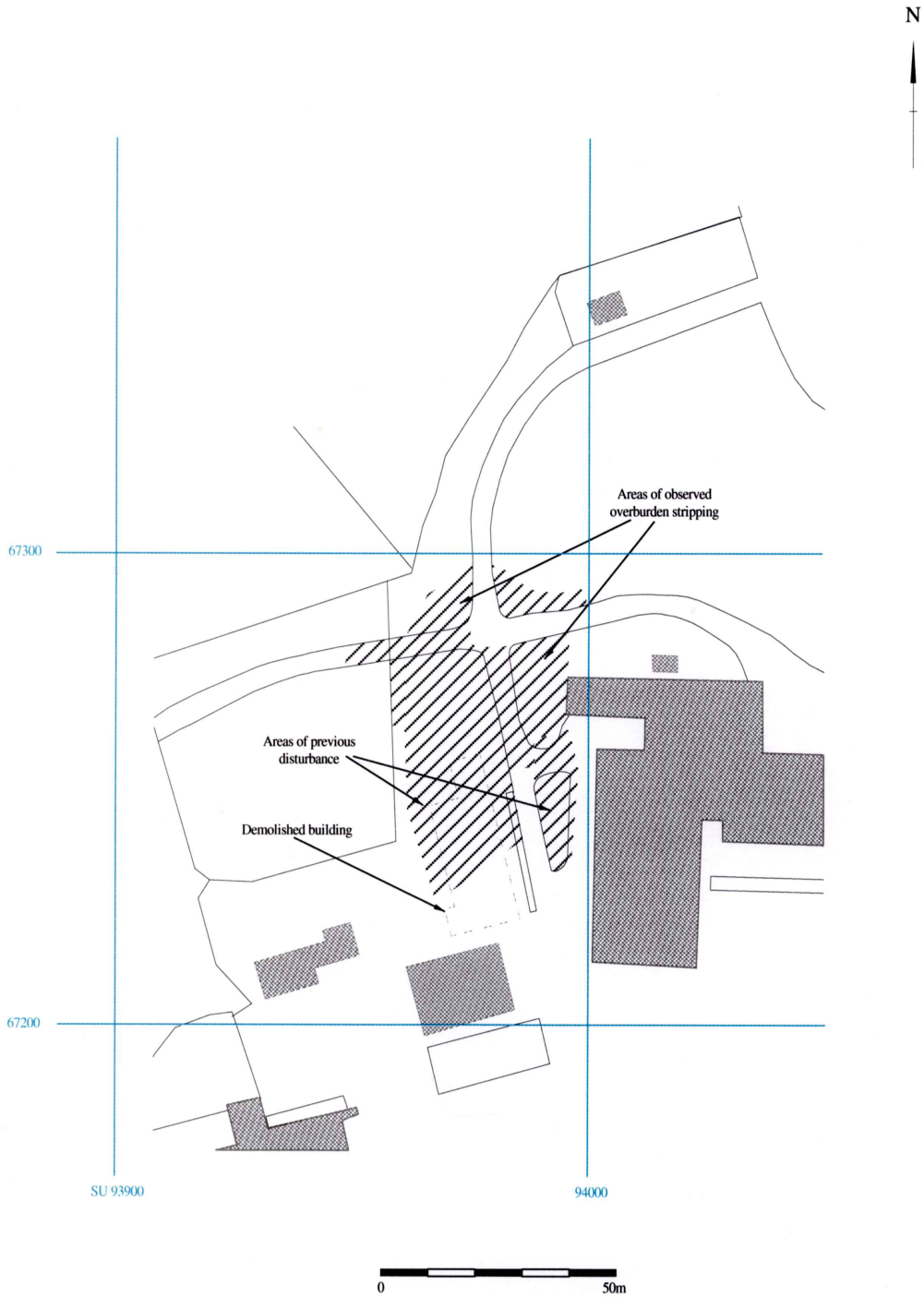


Figure 3. Detailed location of watching brief.

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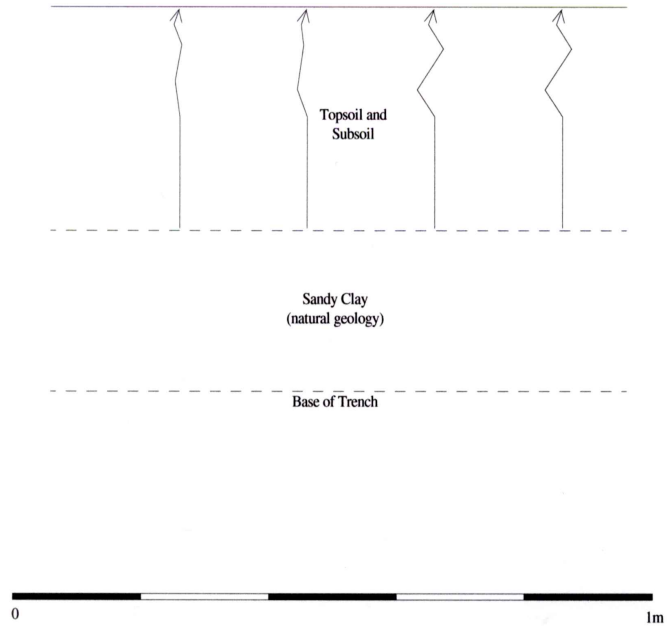


Figure 4. Representative section

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