THAMES VALLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

Land at West End, Warfield, North Bracknell, Berkshire (School Site)

Archaeological Excavation

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: NBB10/69

(SU 8688 7100)

Land at West End, Warfield, North Bracknell, Berkshire (School Site)

An Archaeological Excavation

Draft Publication Report

for Berkeley Homes (Oxford and Chiltern) Limited

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code NBB 10/69

Summary

Site name: Land at West End	, Warfield,	North Bracknell.	, Berkshire (School Site)
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Grid reference: SU 8688 7100

Site activity: Excavation

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: NBB 10/69

Area of site: *c*. 0.28ha

Summary of results: The excavation revealed a modest amount of archaeological features belonging to the medieval period. These form two adjoining enclosures, one large, one small. Whilst a moderate volume of pottery was recovered, sufficient to date the features, the paucity of other finds and other features suggests that this location was not an occupation focus, but was an area for handling stock, on the fringe of an occupied area, and likely to be closely associated with the stream to the west.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 02.07.15

Steve Preston ✓ 02.07.15

Land at West End, Warfield, North Bracknell, Berkshire (School Site) An Archaeological Excavation

by Andy Taylor

Report 10/69d

Introduction

An archaeological excavation was carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services on land at West End, Warfield, North Bracknell, Berkshire (SU 8688 7100), (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Elkie Lees, of Berkeley Homes (Oxford and Chiltern) Limited, Berkeley House, Farnham Lane, Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire, SL2 3RQ.

A hybrid (outline and detailed) planning consent has been gained from Bracknell Forest Borough Council to construct new housing and school. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology as guided by the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Borough Council's policies, requiring a programme of archaeological work in advance of the development. This report is concerned with the excavation of a small area within the School Site. Previous phases of investigation have already been reported on (Platt and Pine 2013; Taylor 2014).

The stripping of the site, using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket, took place between 18th and 23rd March 2015 with the excavation taking place between 20th and 25th March 2015. The archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, RG1 5NR and will be deposited at a local museum prepared to accept archive material.

The work was carried out according to a written scheme of investigation approved by Mr Roland Smith of Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Borough Council and was monitored by him on behalf of the council.

Topography and geology

The site comprises a roughly rectangular plot on the eastern side of the development area. It formerly consisted of pasture and paddocks for horses. It was bounded by Watersplash Lane to the south, 'The Cut', a stream to the west, with further pasture north and east. The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay (BGS 1981), which was observed across the stripped area. The site slopes gently down to the west and lies at a height of c. 53m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential for the site as a whole was highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Wallis 2010) and in an Environmental Statement accompanying the planning application. In summary, the site lies in an area of moderate to high archaeological potential with significant archaeological deposits of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman date being found during recent archaeological projects to the south (Torrance and Durden 2003; Lowe 20013) and west (Roberts (1995). Surface finds of prehistoric flintwork and Roman/medieval pottery are already recorded on the western part of the development site (Ford 1987). Of particular note is the presence of a Roman site to the north-west on Cabbage Hill (Mees 1989). Parts of the larger overall site were previously evaluated (Ford 1989) with Roman and Bronze Age deposits identified to the south with Mesolithic flintwork also present. An initial phase of trenching as part of this project (Platt and Pine 2013) covering infrastructure areas did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest but a subsequent evaluation (Taylor 2014) identified two areas containing medieval deposits. One of these is the subject of this report.

Aims and Objectives

The General Objectives of the project were to:

excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the area threatened by the proposed development;

produce relative and absolute dating for deposits and features recorded on the site;

establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic etc.; and to

produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

Specific Objectives for the excavation were to attempt to address the following questions:

What is the date, nature and extent of the medieval activity on the site?

Are there additional archaeological deposits of the same or other dates present on the site?

Is the site enclosed or unenclosed and does it lie within an organised landscape (ie with a field system)?

The area to be excavated was c. 3380 sq m as shown on Figure 1, centred on the area of medeival potentail revealed by evaluation trenches 213 to 216 and 245. Topsoil and other overburden were removed under continuous archaeological supervision by a machine fitted with a ditching bucket. All archaeological features were to be planned and sectioned as a minimum objective, to agreed sampling fractions depending on the nature of the feature. Upon stripping some of the deposits thought to be archaeological features in the evaluation trenches were less clear, and are now considered probably to have resulted from disturbance.

The Excavation

The excavation revealed a modest amount of archaeological deposits, many of which had been identified during the evaluation. This mainly consisted of linear features forming part of a probable enclosure with other small lengths of gully and a posthole also present.

Enclosure A

Linear feature 500 formed the north and east sides of a possible enclosure. Two sides were evident, possibly using the stream as the west side, but the ditch continued outside the excavation area southwards. Ditch 500 terminated at its western end and turned almost 90° at the north-east corner. Ditch 107 continued the boundary further to the west outside of the excavation area. Its eastern end was unclear but possibly formed an entrance with terminal 101 (though gully 106 may equally have represented the westwards extension of 500). Five slots excavated across ditch 500 (18, 101, 117, 118, 119) revealed it to vary between 0.55m and 0.90m wide and between 0.15m and 0.47m deep. A total of 136 sherds of medieval pottery, two pieces of tile and 11 pieces of animal bone were recovered along its length (including finds from the evaluation).

Within this enclosure was a second ditch (502) subsequently recut and extended (501). These ditches were both broadly parallel to ditch 500 along its northern side and both had a similar 90° turn, but not quite parallel towards the south, with a gap between them and 500 of c. 5-7m. Ditch 502 had three slots excavated (12, 109 and 122) and was between 0.45m and 0.60m wide and between 0.25m and 0.35m deep. It contained nine sherds of medieval pottery (including six from evaluation slot 12), seven pieces of tile and a piece of burnt flint recovered along its length. This ditch appeared to be about 10m long and terminated at both ends within the trench.

Ditch 501 recut ditch 502 (Fig. 5) and extended it in both directions, terminating at its western end but continuing beyond the southern baulk. Four slots (16, 108, 120 and 121) were dug into it revealing it to be between 0.60m and 2.30m wide and between 0.18m and 0.30m deep. A total of 24 sherds of medieval pottery and four pieces of tile were recovered. The terminal (16) was either recut again, or cut by a shallow pit (17) which contained a further 25 sherds of similar pottery.

Ditch 107, also truncated by a modern trackway and tree disturbance, was 1.30m wide and 0.30m. Its only slot produced 36 sherds of medieval pottery.

There were no other features within this enclosure.

Enclosure B

Immediately to the north of ditches 500 and 107 adjacent to the possible entrance, were several short lengths of gully (105, 106, 505), two of which turned through 90° to form a small rectangular enclosure or pen. The pen was c. 5m wide but of unknown length as it extended beyond the baulk to the west. The ground plan was not continuous but for 105 and 505 was partially overlapping as if they had been dug either side of an established boundary such as a hedge or bank. There was a gap of c. 2.5m to the south formed by terminals 104 and 102, probably to form an entrance with Enclosure 1. A posthole (104) may well have functioned as a gate post at this location.

Parallel and adjacent to enclosure B ditch 505 was ditch 504, aligned North-South. It terminated at both ends and butted ditch 500 to the south. Ditch 504 was sampled by three slots (100, 110 and 111) which revealed it to be between 0.50m and 0.64m wide and between 0.13m and 0.39m deep. Twenty-four sherds of medieval pottery were recovered.

Gully 505 also aligned North-South and terminated at both ends, which were both excavated (102 and 103). These measured between 0.53m and 0.55m wide and between 0.12m and 0.15m deep producing five sherds of medieval pottery. Posthole 104 was located between gully 505 and terminus 106, which may represent a gateway into a small paddock area. The posthole measured 0.40m wide and 0.06m deep and produced eight sherds of medieval pottery.

Terminal 106 measured 0.47m wide and 0.13m deep, producing six sherds of medieval pottery. Much of its length had been truncated away by a redundant farm trackway.

Other features

Ditch 503 was located on the northern side of the site and was aligned approximately East-West and measured between 0.52m and 0.88m wide and between 0.22m and 0.52m deep. It did not produce any dating evidence. Although broadly parallel to the northern part of ditch 500, it is difficult to tell if this ditch was in any way related to the later, as it could just as easily be described as aligned towards a bend in the stream to the west.

A probable pit (112) was noted on the western edge adjacent to ditch 103. It was 0.61m wide and 0.10m deep and produced two pieces of tile.

Deposit 10 found during the evaluation was originally thought to be a small gully. However, no further trace of it was recorded and it appears to have been a small area of disturbance, perhaps a roothole. It contained a single sherd of medieval pottery

Undated posthole 15 was also found in the evaluation in an area thought to contain two undated gullies (13, 14). However the latter are now considered to be an area of disturbance of uncertain origin and the significance of feature 15 is uncertain.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 234 sherds with a total weight of 2,238g. It is all medieval and adds to the 47 sherds (388g) from the corresponding evaluation trenches in the same area. The following fabric types were noted:

- **NEWB:** Newbury 'A/B' ware. Late 11th—late 14th century (Mepham 1997, 51-2). A range of sand, flint and limestone tempered wares. Sparse to moderate limestone up to 2mm, rounded white or clear quartz up to 0.5mm, angular fragments of white, grey or black flint. Jars, bowls and pitchers. 2 sherds, 36g.
- MSW: Medieval Sandy ware, Mid/Late 11th -late 12th century. Very similar to "Early Surrey Coarseware", London fabric ESUR, and dated to the mid/late 11th-late 12th century (Vince 1985, 37). Dense sub-rounded white, grey and clear quartz up to 0.5 mm. 56 sherds, 549g.
- **OSW:** range Sandy Ware, mid 12th–13th century. Fairly hard, orange sandy fabric. Very similar to Surrey fabric OQ (Jones 1998). 3 sherd, 26g.
- **SUR: Surrey Whiteware**, mid 13th—mid 15th century (Pearce and Vince 1988). A range of whitewares, from several sources, in Surrey, including Kingston and Cheam. Range of vessel forms which changes over time, but the earlier assemblages are dominated by glazed jugs, some with slipped, incised and plastic decoration. 153 sherds, 1495g.
- **LMR: Late Medieval Reduced Ware**, ?15th–16th century. Hard, grey, wheel-thrown sandy ware, similar to fabric 8 from Sir Christopher Wren's House Hotel, Windsor (Whittingham 2005, 142). 15 sherds, 132g

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. The range of fabric types is fairly typical of sites in the region, and indicates that the bulk of activity at the site was in the earlier part of the medieval period, ie. the late 11th–14th centuries. The Late Medieval Reduced ware (fabric LMR) is somewhat unusual, however. The fabric has some similarities with those of the well-known greyware industries of South Hertfordshire and Limpsfield (Blackmore and Pearce 2010), but the ware from this site is much harder, thicker-walled and more regular, and a single rimsherd was present with a high, everted and slightly flattened profile which is very different to the forms of the more well-known greywares. It is tentatively dated to the late medieval period on typological grounds.

The material is generally in fairly good condition, although most of the sherds show some degree of abrasion. The mean sherd size is fairly typical of sites of the period, however, and partially reconstructable vessels occurred in several contexts, suggesting that the attrition is probably due to burial conditions rather than residuality, and that there was settlement within the immediate vicinity of these excavations.

The assemblage consists entirely of fragments of jars, bowls and glazed jugs, which is typical of the earlier medieval period, with the more developed vessel forms of the late medieval period entirely absent. It also appears to be of an entirely domestic nature. Many of the Surrey Whiteware jug fragments had a plain green glaze, with just one highly-decorated example noted, from context (177). It had an applied pad of body clay, probably in the shape of a leaf, with slashed decoration, and a pellet of brown clay stamped with a die with a 'cross and dot' motif. They are very similar to the stamp impression on pads from two other known vessels from London, both in Coarse Border Ware (Pearce and Vince 1988, fig. 113, nos 455 and 456), although in this case the pads of slip are slightly too small, and thus the impressions are incomplete.

Ceramic Building Material by Danielle Milbank

Brick and tile fragment were recovered from just five contexts encountered during the excavation. To this can be added a small amount from the evaluation trenches that covered the same area In total, 30 fragments, weighing 962g were present, all of which were tile fragments with no brick indentified. These were examined under x10 magnification and are summarised in Appendix 4.

The most commonly occurring fabric type was a hard, evenly fired clay with fine sandy and occasional small groggy inclusions. An example of a second fabric type was recovered from 118 (172) which has occasional fine limestone inclusions. These fragments were typically 16mm thick, with a rough underside and a slightly uneven finish, with some edge-thickening. They are mid red colour and are broadly datable to the later medieval or post medieval period.

A fragment from 112 (165) is of a similar fabric, and has a light red colour and a grey (reduced) core indicating reducing conditions during firing, with a brown red centre within this. It is slightly uneven and has a peg hole. This example is more typical of the medieval rather than post medieval period but cannot be closely dated.

A fragment from 122 (178) has the impression of a small hoof print, most likely to be that of a sheep/goat juvenile, and suggests that the 'green' (unfired) tile was laid flat before firing.

The assemblage derived from the site is modest, and indicates activity on the site in the medieval and post-medieval periods. Although some of the fragments are of a fairly fine, soft fabric which can be characteristic of Roman material, no pieces of Roman tile or brick were identified with certainty. Overall, the assemblage reflects domestic use and no specific industry or activity is suggested by the material.

Animal and Burnt Bone by Ceri Falys

Twelve small pieces of animal bone were recovered from two fills within ditch 118 (fills 172 and 173). A total of 11 unburnt pieces (recovered from deposits 172 and 173) and 1 burnt fragment of bone (from 172) were present for analysis, weighing 2g and 0.5g, respectively (Appendix 5). The surface preservation of the remains was generally fair, although a high degree of fragmentation was present. The maximum fragment sizes of the unburnt bone differed between contexts, with 11.9mm recorded in (172) and 45.6mm in (173). The single piece of burnt bone was uniformly white in colour and measured just 12.2mm. The white colouring to the bone indicates it was subjected to fire for a sufficient amount of time, temperature and oxygen supply to fully oxidize the organic components of the bone.

The overall state of preservation and small fragment size hindered much of the element identification. However, a minimum of one small mammal (dog, cat, etc) was present within the assemblage, as represented by fragments of long bone midshafts in deposit 173. It was not possible to identify the species of origin. The burnt fragment from 172 was non-descript and also not identifiable.

Fired Clay by Andy Taylor

Five pieces of fired clay were recovered from the site weighing 12g. None of these showed any diagnostic traits.

Charred plant remains by Andy Taylor

Twelve bulk soil samples were taken from 11 features with c. 20L of each floated and wet sieved using a 0.5mm mesh. The details are set out in Appendix 1. All twelve samples contained some charred plant remains but usually in only minute quantities. A modest quantity of charcoal was recovered from ditch slot 106 (158) but with a large quantity from ditch slot 101 (152). In addition a possible cereal grain was recovered from ditch slot 105 (159) and weed seeds were present in the sample from slot 105 (157). These remains allow very little to be inferred about this component of agricultural production of the site.

Conclusion

The excavation revealed a modest amount of archaeological features, the majority of which had been identified in the evaluation, and all, except one undated ditch, belonging to the medieval period. These mostly comprised linear features forming two adjoining enclosures, one large, one small. Whilst a moderate volume of pottery was recovered, sufficient to date the features, the paucity of other finds and other features suggests that this location

was not an occupation focus, but was an area for handling stock. This was probably located on the fringe of an occupied area but could equally have been located as a working facility well removed from the main farming base, and likely to be closely associated with the stream to the west. Low levels of medieval finds from evaluation trenches at Park Farm (Ford 1989), on the other side of The Cut to the west, suggest low-level but widespread pastoral use of this landscape in the early medieval period, albeit this is somewhat at odds with the limited documentary evidence for the area which suggests Warfield was mainly woodland at this period and possibly within the royal forest of Windsor (the 'forest' however was a legal definition, not necessarily an indication of continuous tree cover). At the time of Domesday Book (AD1086), Warfield was a large estate with plenty of arable land, as well as extensive woodland, so a broadly mixed landscape can be envisaged.

Acknowledgements

The excavation was funded by Berkeley Homes (Oxford and Chiltern) Limited and it was carried out by the author and Lizzi Lewins with illustrations by the author and Andrew Mundin.

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APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of Excavated Features

Cut	Deposit	Group	Туре	Date	Samples	Comment
10	60		Roothole	-		Medieval pottery (1 sherd)
11	61	501	Ditch	medieval		
12	62	502	Ditch	medieval		
13	63		Roothole?	-		
14	64		Roothole?			
15	65		Posthole?	-		
16	66	501	Terminal	medieval		
17	67		Pit	medieval		
18	68	500	Ditch	medieval		
100	150-1	504	Gully Terminus	medieval	11	Little charcoal
101	152	500	Gully Terminus	medieval	10	Much charcoal
102	154	505	Gully Terminus	medieval	12	Little charcoal
103	155	505	Gully Terminus	medieval		
104	156	505	Posthole	medieval		
105	157		Gully Terminus	medieval	13	Little charcoal and weed seeds
106	158		Gully Terminus	medieval	14	Some charcoal
107	159	500?	Ditch	medieval	15	Little charcoal and crereal?
108	160162	501	Ditch	medieval	16	Little charcoal
109	161	502	Ditch Terminus	medieval		
110	163	504	Gully	medieval		
111	164	504	Gully Terminus	medieval		
112	165		Pit	-	17	Little charcoal
113	166	503	Gully	-		
114	167		Pit/Treebole	-		
115	168	503	Ditch	-	18	Little charcoal
116	169-70	503	Ditch	-		
117	171	500	Ditch	medieval		
118	172-3	500	Ditch	medieval	19,20	Little charcoal
119	174	500	Ditch	medieval	T	
120	175-6	501	Gully	medieval	21	Little charcoal
121	177	501	Ditch	medieval		
122	178	502	Ditch	medieval		

APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of Pottery

			NE	WB	M	ISW	O.	SW	SU	IJ R	Li	MR
Group	Cut	Fill	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
500	101	152	1	29								
505	103	155			5	30						
505	104	156			8	66						
	106	158			6	69						
	107	159							36	263		
504	110	163			13	217	1	6				
504	111	164			10	20						
500	117	171	1	7					45	543		
500	118	172			3	31	1	8	43	413	11	85
500	118	173			5	40			15	84	4	47
501	120	174							1	6		
501	120	175			1	46			10	160		
501	121	177			2	14	1	12	3	26		
502	122	178			3	16						
		Total	2	36	56	549	3	26	153	1495	15	132

From the evaluation trenches also in this area:

		MSW		ASH		SUR	
Cut	Deposit	N	Wt	N	W	N	Wt
		o		0	t	o	
11	61	1	3			3	18
12	62	4	44			2	6
16	66					5	47
17	67			1	2	24	231
18	68	3	30			4	7

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Ceramic Building Material

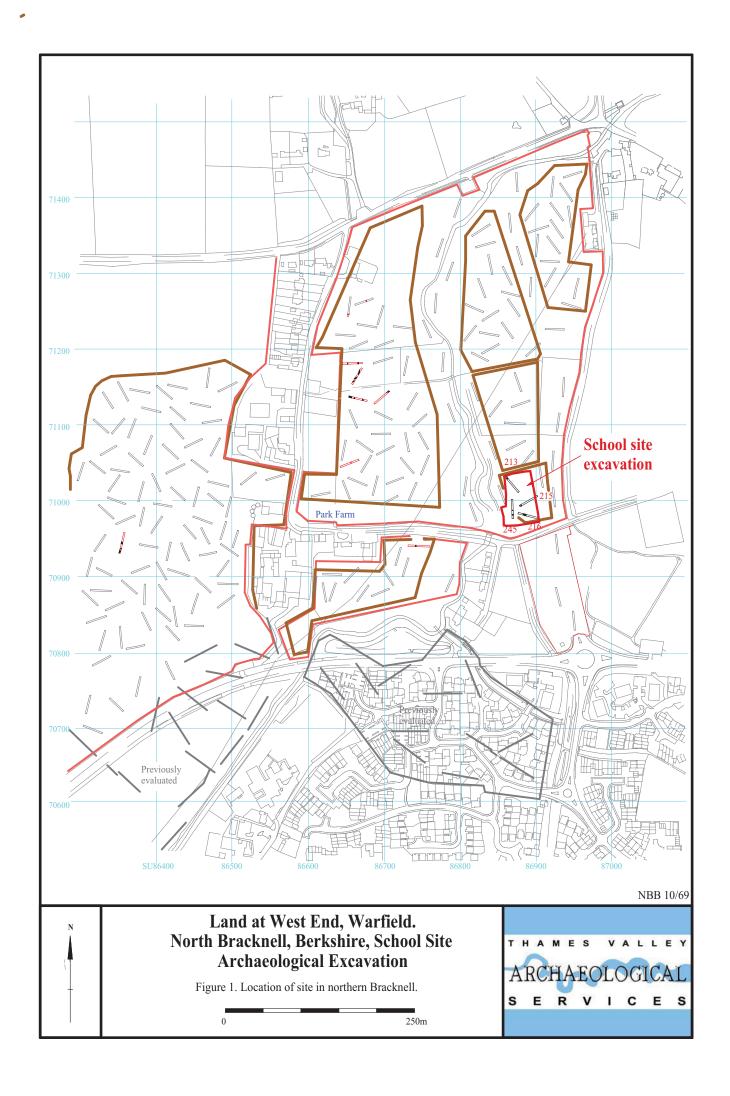
Trench	Cut	Deposit	Туре	B-T	No	Wt (g)
216	12	62	Ditch	T	1	11
245	16	66	Pit	T	1	49
245	17	67	Ditch	T	7	123
245	18	68	Ditch	T	2	117
	112	165	Pit	T	2	60
	118	172	Ditch	T	6	212
	120	175	Gully	T	2	93
	121	177	Ditch	T	2	167
	122	178	Ditch	T	7	130
					30	962

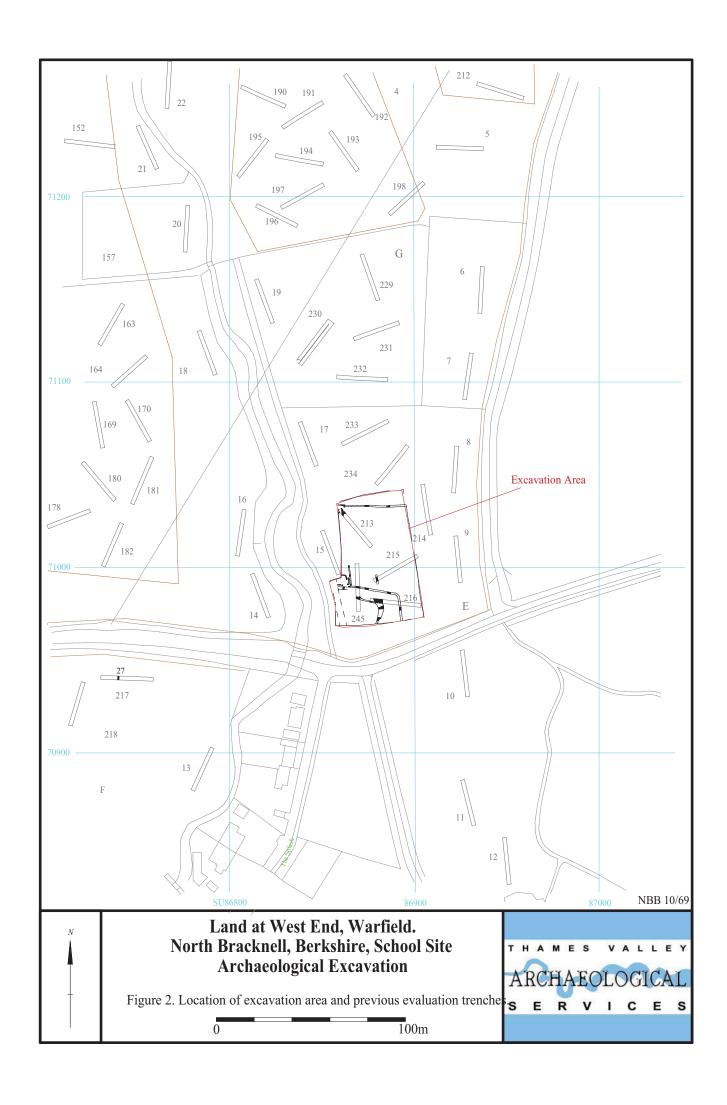
APPENDIX 4: Catalogue of Fired Clay

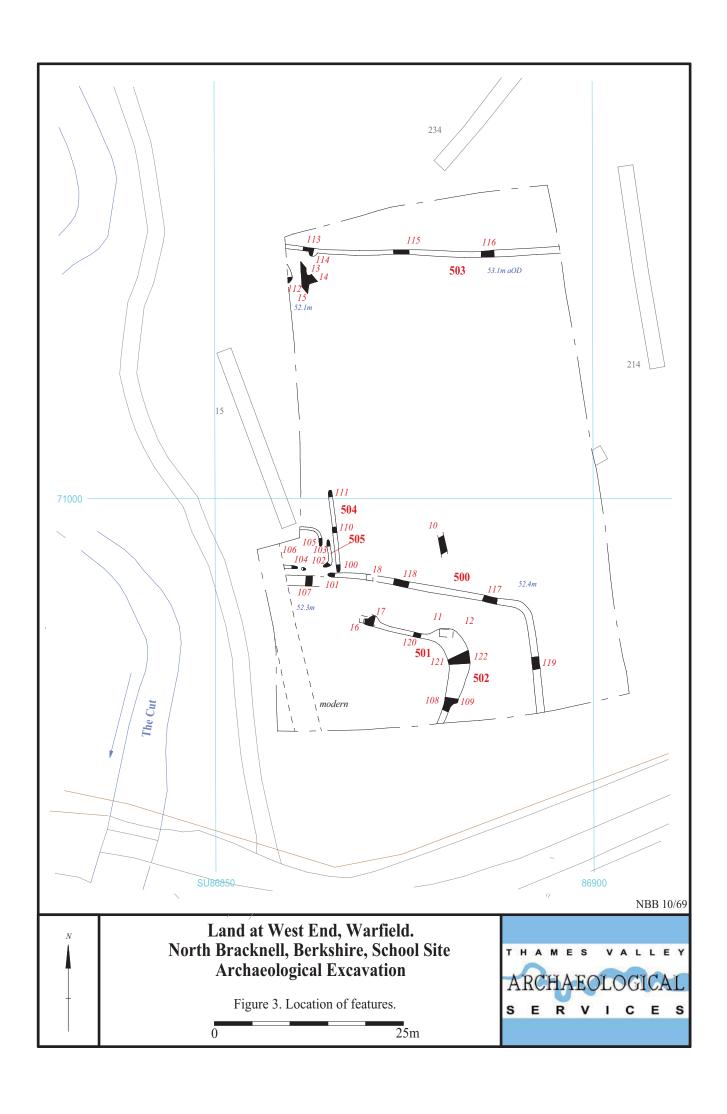
Cut	Deposit	Group	Туре	No	Weight
108	160	501	Ditch	1	2
120	175		Gully	4	10

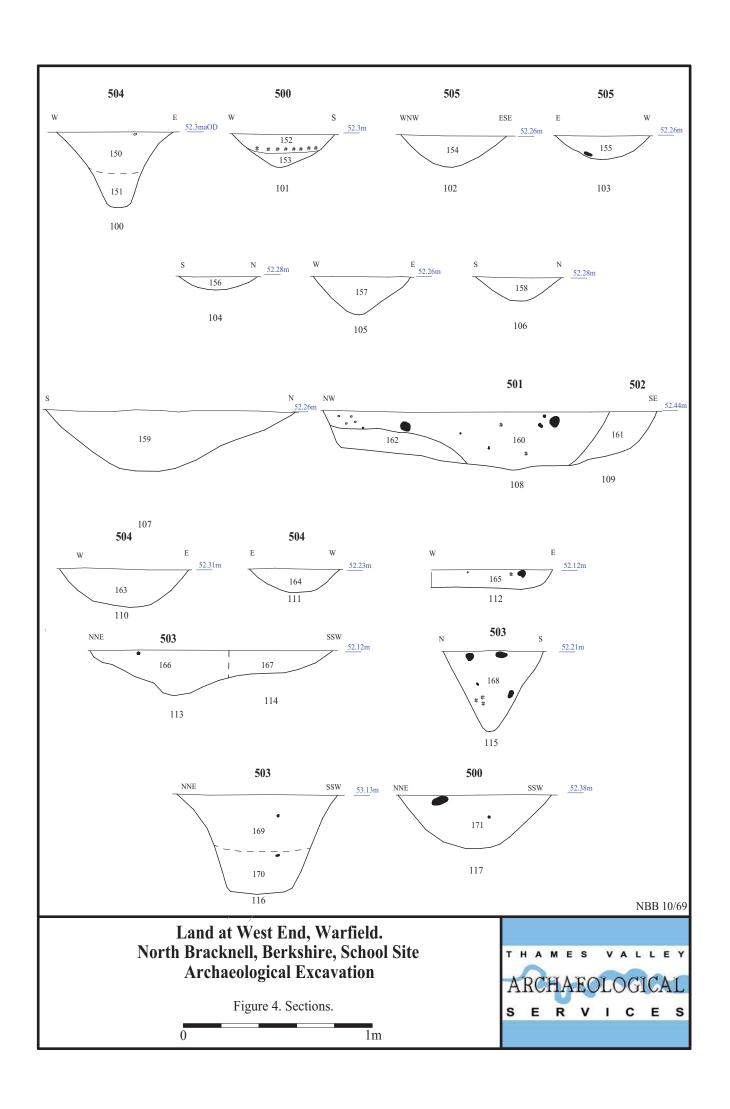
APPENDIX 5: Catalogue of Animal Bone

		Unbu	rnt	Burnt			
Cut	Deposit	No frags	Wt (g)	No. frags	Wt (g)	Small mammal	Unidentified
118	172	5	1	1	0.5	-	5
118	173	6	1	0	0	6	_









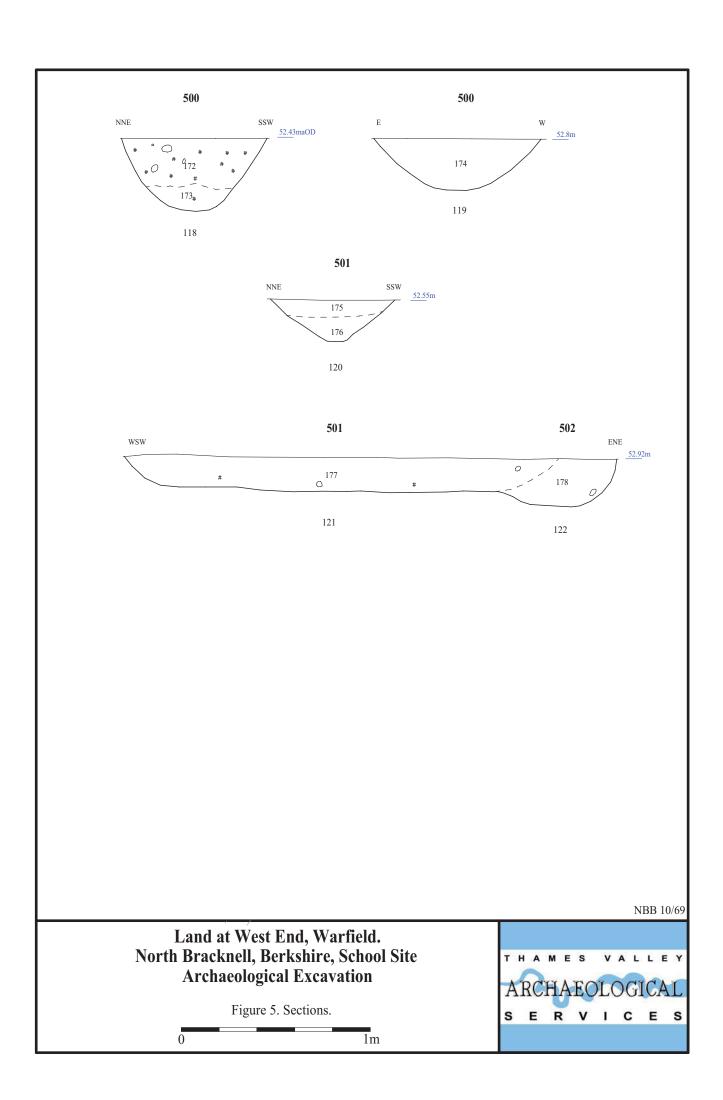




Plate 1. Stripped area, looking south.



Plate 2. Terminal 100 of 500, looking east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

NBB 10/69d

Land at West End, Warfield, North Bracknell, Berkshire, School Site Archaeological Excavation

Plates 1 - 2.





Plate 3.Gully 504, slot 110, looking north, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.



Plate 4. Ditches 501 and 502, slot 121 and 122, looking north, Scales: 2m, 0.3m and 0.1m.

NBB 10/69d

Land at West End, Warfield, North Bracknell, Berkshire, School Site Archaeological Excavation

Plates 3 - 4.



TIME CHART

Calendar Years

Modern	AD 1901
Victorian	AD 1837
Post Medieval	AD 1500
Medieval	AD 1066
Saxon	AD 410
Roman Iron Age	BC/AD
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 ↓
▼	▼



Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR

> Tel: 0118 9260552 Fax: 0118 9260553 Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk Web: www.tvas.co.uk