

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**2 Valley Road, Newbury,
West Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Tim Dawson

Site Code: VRN19/11

(SU 4601 6606)

2 Valley Road, Newbury, West Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Palady Homes

by Tim Dawson

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code VRN 19/11

May 2019

Summary

Site name: 2 Valley Road, Newbury, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 4601 6606

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 21st and 22nd May 2019

Project coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Anne-Michelle Huvig and Aidan Colyer

Site code: VRN 19/11

Area of site: 215 sq m

Summary of results: No finds or features of archaeological interest were identified during the groundworks.

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

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2 Valley Road, Newbury, West Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Tim Dawson

Report 19/11

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 2 Valley Road, Newbury, West Berkshire (SU 4601 6606) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Adrian Doyle of Palady Homes, PO Box 7795, Hungerford, West Berkshire, RG17 1DQ.

Planning consent (15/02815/FUL) has been gained from West Berkshire Council for the construction of a new house on land to the rear of 2 Valley Road. The consent is subject to a condition (15) relating to archaeology, which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Sarah Orr, Senior Archaeologist at West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Aidan Colyer and Anne-Michelle Huvig on 21st and 22nd of May 2019 and the site code is VRN 19/11.

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 consists of a 215 sq m parcel of land which was formerly part of the back garden of 2 Valley Road. The property is located on the western fringe of Newbury, approximately 1.5km south-west of the town centre (Fig. 1). At the time of the watching brief the portion of garden occupied by the development site had been cleared of all vegetation and a garage block. It is bordered to the north-east by the remainder of the garden, to the north by Fifth Road and on other sides by further residential properties (Fig. 2). The site is flat at a height of c.88m above Ordnance Datum, on the southern slope of the valley of the river Kennet. The land rises moderately steeply to the south of the site but drops only very gently towards the river and canal some 1km to the north. The underlying geology is recorded as Thatcham Gravel (Third Terrace) (BGS 2006), which was observed as an orange-brown sandy gravel.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a consultation document prepared by Mr Alex Godden, former archaeological officer at West Berkshire. In summary, this potential stems from its location within the environs of the First Battle of Newbury in 1643, but not within the designated battlefield site area. It is possible that artefacts or even earthworks relating to the battle may be present within the development site. More generally, the site also lies within the archaeologically rich Kennet Valley and there is a possibility of finds or sites of other periods (Lobb *et al.* 1985; Gajos *et al.* 2011).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits or finds affected by the new construction work. This was to include the monitoring of any intrusive groundworks such as foundation trenches.

The excavation of the foundation trenches using a mini-digger with a 0.6m-wide bucket was observed across the footprint of the new house. Spoil heaps were monitored for finds and metal-detected specifically to check for battle-related artefacts. The foundation trenches were accessible and any potential archaeological features were hand-cleaned.

Results

The foundation trenches covered an area measuring 10.5m long by 7.2m wide with a perimeter trench and a series of internal trenches subdividing the western half (Fig. 3, Pls 1-2). The trenches measured 0.64-0.70m in width and were excavated to a depth of 1.0-1.2m. The stratigraphy exposed in the eastern foundation trench consisted of 0.3m of disturbed topsoil and 0.2m of disturbed subsoil overlying the natural compact orange-brown sandy gravel geology while in the western foundation trench consisted of 0.5m of disturbed topsoil and 0.2m of disturbed subsoil overlying the natural geology (Fig. 4). The disturbance to the upper layers is most likely due to root action from abundant garden plants and the construction of the garage on the western half of the footprint. The disturbed ground contained modern rubble such as fragments of brick and concrete.

No features of archaeological interest were identified during the course of the groundworks and no finds were recovered.

Finds

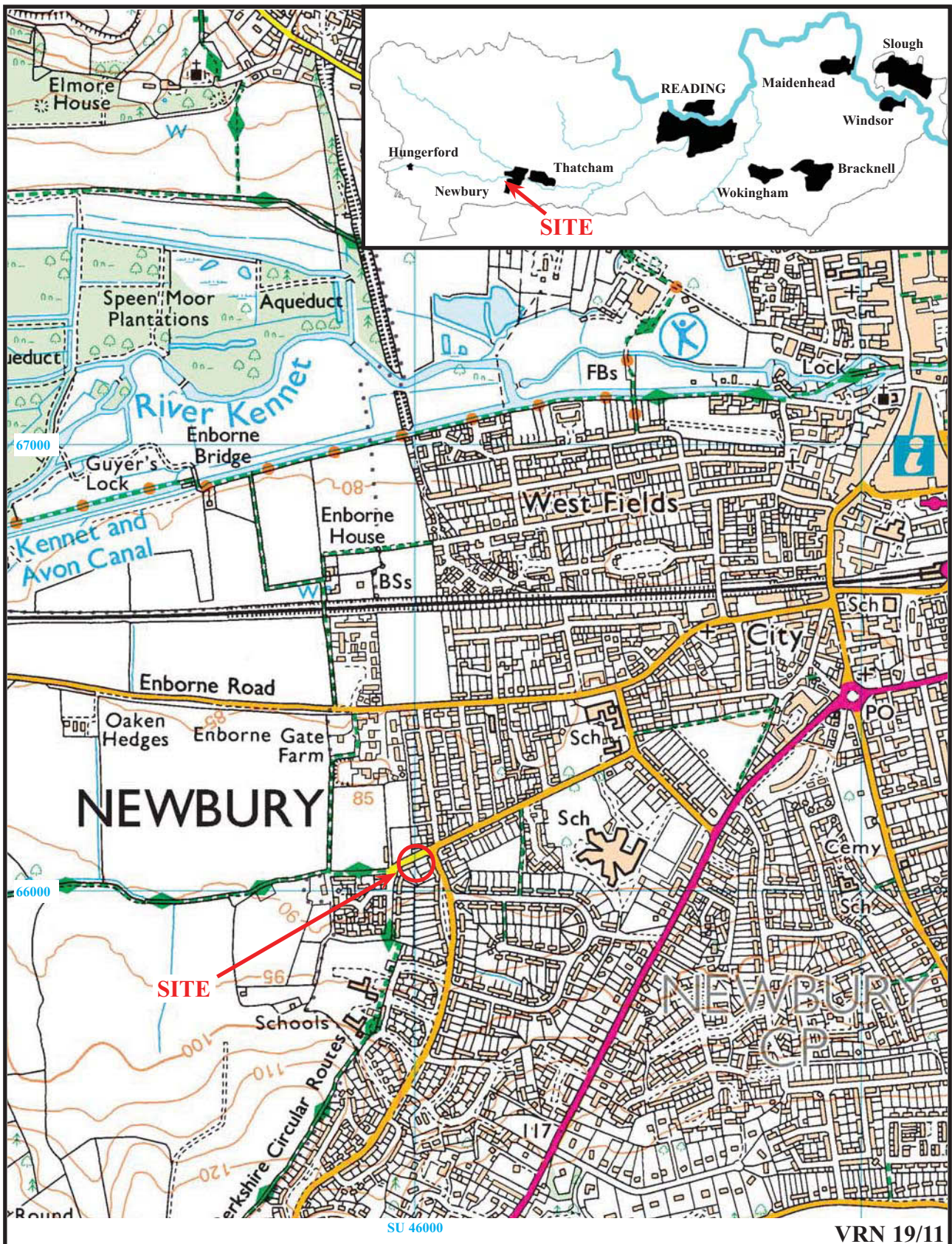
No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring of the groundworks associated with the construction of a new building on land to the rear of 2 Valley Road was successfully undertaken but no finds or features of archaeological interest were identified.

References

- BGS, 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 367, Bedrock and Superficial Edition, Keyworth
- Gajos, P, Allen, M, Gale, R, Stevens, C J and Every, R, 2011, 'Roundhouses but no Roundheads: Excavations of the site of the first battle of Newbury, (1643)', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **80**, 135-44
- Lobb, S J, 1985, 'The Kennet Valley survey', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **72** (for 1983-5), 76-78
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London



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Figure 1. Location of site within Newbury and Berkshire.

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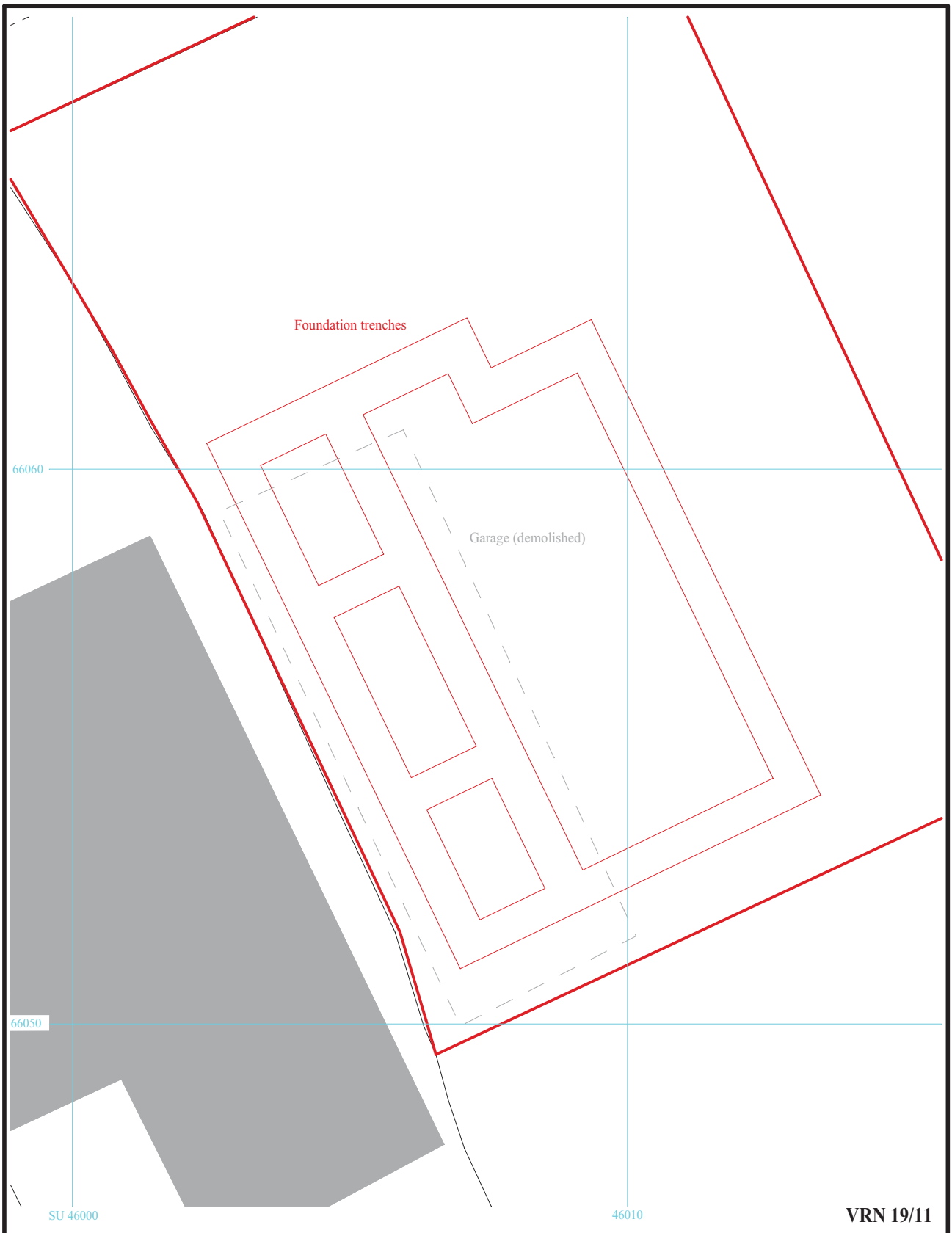
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Figure 2. Location of site off Valley Road.

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Figure 3. Site layout.



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SW NE

Disturbed topsoil

Disturbed subsoil

Compact orange-brown sandy gravel (natural geology)

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Figure 4. Representative Section.



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Plate 1. Eastern foundation trench, looking south-east.



Plate 2. Western foundation trenches, looking south-east.

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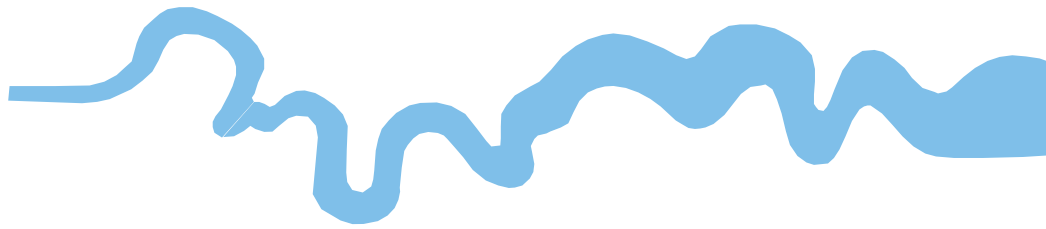
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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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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