

**174–178 Craven Road,
Newbury, West Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Renaissance Habitat**

by Jennifer Lowe

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CRN07/133

March 2008

Summary

Site name: 174–178 Craven Road, Newbury, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU4615 6680

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 4th October 2007 to 6th March 2008

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Jennifer Lowe

Site code: CRN07/133

Area of site: 420 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the course of the works and no metal objects of any antiquity were recovered during a metal detecting survey.

Monuments identified: None

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

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 13.03.08 Steve Preston✓ 11.03.08
---------------------------	---

174–178 Craven Road, Newbury, West Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Jennifer Lowe

Report 07/133

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 174–178 Craven Road, Newbury, West Berkshire (SU4615 6680) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Nick Turner of Renaissance Habitat Ltd, Renaissance House, 116 Bartholomew Street, Newbury, West Berkshire.

Planning permission (app no 05/00159/FULMAJ) has been granted by West Berkshire Council to demolish the existing properties at 174, 176 and 178 Craven Road and to develop a new apartment block on the site. This consent is subject to a condition (17) which requires the implementation a programme of archaeological investigation, which in this instance was to take the form of a watching brief, to take place during any ground disturbance works.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the West Berkshire Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by the West Berkshire Council Archaeological Officer, Mr Duncan Coe. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford, Jennifer Lowe, Andy Mordin and Jo Pine between 4th October 2008 and 6th March 2008. The site code is CRN07/133.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the south west of the historic core of Newbury, in an area of residential properties; the Kennet and Avon Canal is situated approximately 150m to the north (Fig, 2). The site is rectangular in shape and is situated on the northern side of Craven Road. Prior to development it was occupied by three residential properties with associated garden areas to the front and rear. The underlying geology is recorded as River and Valley gravel (BGS 1947) which was observed in part of the foundation plot; an orange brown clay with flints was also observed. The site lies at a height of approximately 81m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The sites archaeological potential stems from its location on the floor of the valley of the river Kennet. This topographical location is regarded as being favoured for occupation since Mesolithic times and this would appear to be the case in the Newbury area with Mesolithic sites recorded not only within the town but also to the east and west towards Kintbury and Hungerford (Lobb and Rose 1996; WBAS 2006). The site also lies within a zone of interest for the Civil War battlefield of the First Battle of Newbury.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work. In general this was to involve examination of areas of topsoil stripping, landscaping, ground reduction and the digging of trenches for foundations and services as necessary.

A metal detector survey was carried out across the site prior to demolition in order to enhance retrieval, especially of any objects lost or discarded during the Civil War.

Results

Metal detector survey

Prior to the demolition of the properties a metal detector survey was carried out across the site in the front and rear garden areas avoiding areas of hard standing and other physical obstructions (Fig 5). No objects relating to the Civil War (or any other period) were recovered during the survey.

Test Pits

The excavation of two test pits was monitored prior to the demolition of the properties (Fig. 3). Test Pit 1, excavated to the rear of 178 Craven Road, measured 2.2m by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 1.40m. The stratigraphy observed comprised 0.35m of topsoil overlying 0.45m of light yellow brown sandy silt subsoil which sealed a yellow sandy gravel natural. Test pit 2 was excavated to the rear of 174 Craven Road and also measured 2.2m by 1m, and was also excavated to a depth of 1.40m. The stratigraphy observed was largely the same as test pit 1 with 0.25m of topsoil overlying 0.45m of subsoil which in turn overlay a sandy gravel natural.

Foundation plot

The foundations excavated across the site were approximately 1m wide and varied in depth from 0.60m in the north-east corner to 2.30m in the south-east corner (Figs. 3 and 4). The stratigraphy observed was largely the same throughout the foundation plot with 0.25m of topsoil overlying 0.25-0.40m of light yellow brown sandy silt subsoil which sealed natural geology; between 0.25-0.40m of made ground was observed towards the south-west corner of the plot above the subsoil layer. The natural geology varied across the foundation plot being more clayey with gravel toward the eastern half of the plot and an orange sandy flinty gravel in the south east corner.

No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the course of the groundworks.

Finds

No finds were retrieved during either the metal detector survey or the main watching brief.

Conclusion

The watching brief at Craven Road failed to record any finds or features of archaeological interest. The metal detector survey also failed to retrieve any metal objects that might have related to the Civil War battle known to have taken place within the close proximity of the site.

References

- BGS, 1947, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 267, Drift Edition, Keyworth
Lobb, S, J and Rose, P G, 1996, *Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley, Berkshire*, Wessex Archaeol Rep 9, Salisbury
PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
WBAS, 2006, *Historic Newbury: fit for the future*, West Berkshire Archaeology Service, Newbury



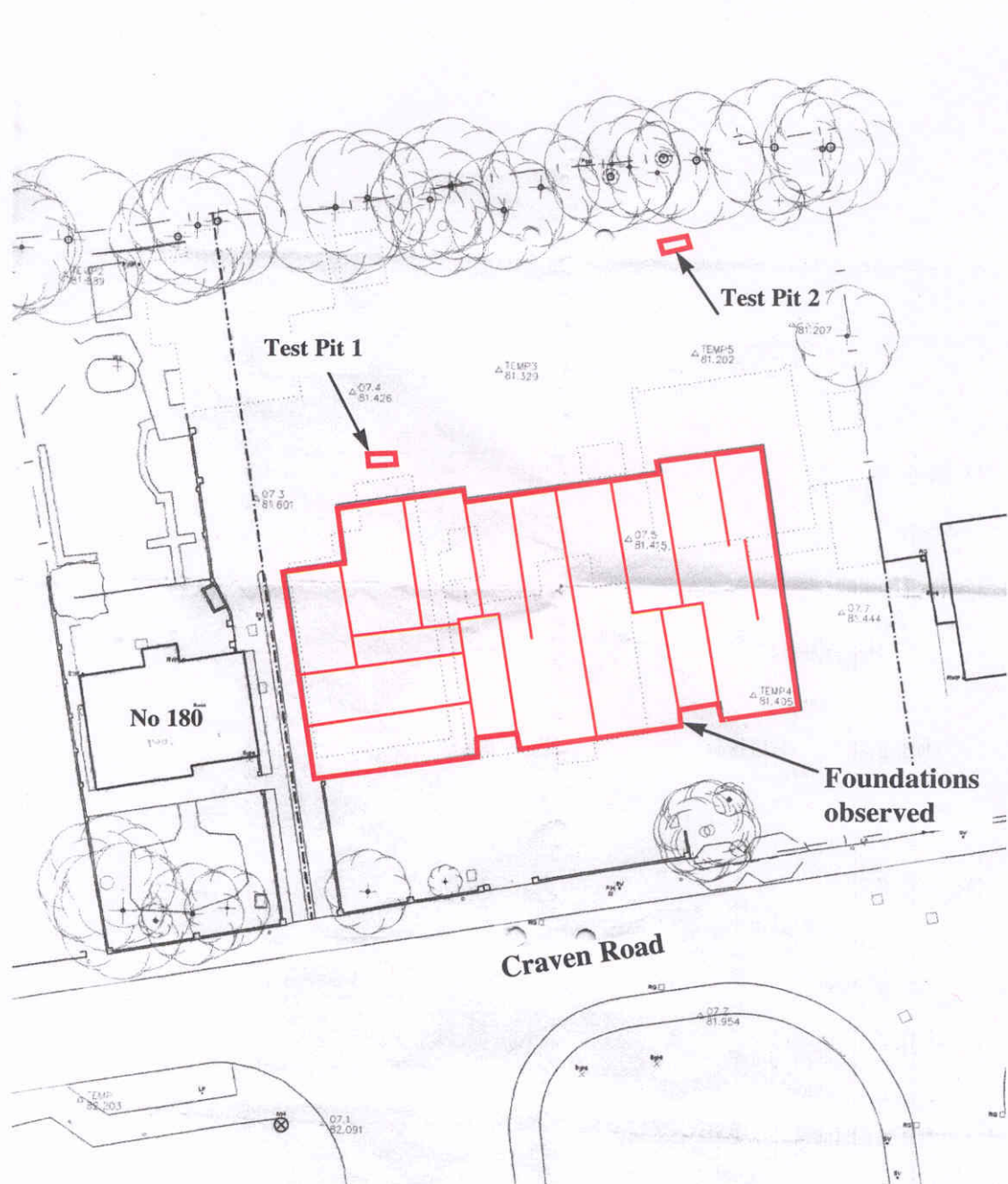
CRN 07/133

**174-178 Craven Road, Newbury, Berkshire, 2008
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site within Newbury

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital
mapping under licence.
Scale 1:1250

T H A M E S V A L L E Y
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
S E R V I C E S



CRN 07/133

**174-178 Craven Road, Newbury, Berkshire, 2008
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Plan of foundations observed during the watching brief and test pit locations.

Scale 1:400

T H A M E S V A L L E Y
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
S E R V I C E S

174-178 Craven Road, Newbury, West Berkshire, 2008

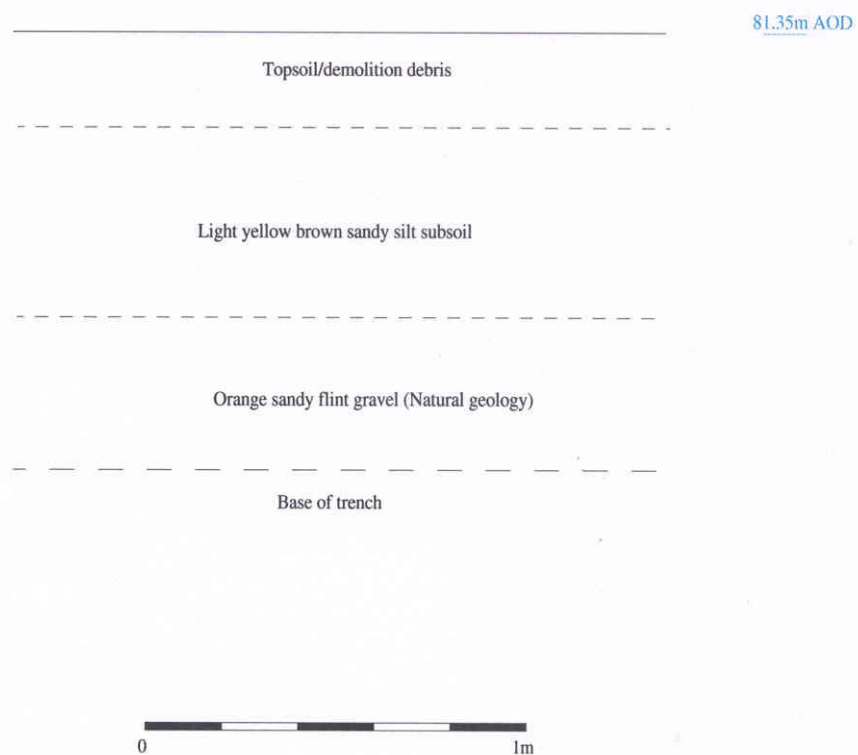


Figure 4. Representative Section

