

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**45 Albert Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Maisie Foster

Site Code: ASC 18/211

SU 706755

**45 Albert Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Elegant Homes Reading Ltd**

by Maisie Foster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code ASC 18/211

December 2020

Summary

Site name: 45 Albert Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7072 7550

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 9th – 28th October 2020

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Elspeth St. John-Brooks

Site code: ASC 18/211

Area of site: c. 500 sq m observed within site of 1250 sq m

Summary of results: No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were encountered.

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

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:
www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 07.12.20 Steve Preston ✓ 04.12.20

45 Albert Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Maisie Foster

Report 18/211

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 45 Albert Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7AW (SU7072 7550) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr John Neville of Elegant Homes Reading Ltd, 1A Patrick Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8DD.

Planning permission (171753) has been granted by Reading Borough Council for the construction of a new house. Due to the potential disturbance of below-ground archaeological remains by these works, the consent is subject to a condition (14) requiring an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018) and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Roland Smith, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological adviser to the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Elspeth St. John-Brooks, David Sanchez and Will Attard between 9th and 28th December 2020 and the site code is ASC 18/211.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the west side of Albert Road just before the turning for Highmoor Road. It is a small plot of land north-east of the centre of Caversham (Fig. 1) which lies to the north of Reading and the River Thames. The site lies at a height of *c.*70m above Ordnance Datum on the Boyn Hill gravel terrace, which in turn overlies the Seaford chalk formation (BGS 2000).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley (Booth *et al.* 2007; Lambrick *et al.* 2009) with a wide range of sites and finds recorded in the Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record in the vicinity. Of particular note is a collection of prehistoric struck flints and a fragment of a Bronze Age bronze sword recorded as being recovered from the garden of 50 Chazey Road. The relatively large number of finds recovered from such a small area has been suggested to indicate the

presence of a prehistoric site somewhere in the immediate vicinity. The flint assemblage is considered Neolithic or Bronze Age in date, and includes a mixture of struck flakes and implements such as scrapers. Two hammer stones were also recovered (Mycombe 2006). More recent fieldwork has revealed a Roman enclosure on the playing fields (Berkshire HER). The environs of the site in general include various findspots of Neolithic and Bronze Age flintwork, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval pottery, undated human burials and Roman coins. Bronze Age occupation has been recorded on St Peter's Hill to the south-east (Ford and Raymond 2013). Medieval occupation extensive prehistoric occupation and Roman occupation have also been recorded on the Mapledurham Golf Courses to the north and north west with Roman occupation close to Blagrove Farm (Ford 1991; Hull 1998; Manisse, submitted). The environs of the site are also noteworthy for the presence of Palaeolithic flint handaxes and other tools, with the site lying on Boyn Hill Gravel (Wymer 1968).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the project were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks for the new development. This was expected to involve foundation trench digging and other intrusive groundworks such as the excavation of service trenches and overburden removal. All trenching and ground reduction was undertaken with a small 360° type excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Spoil heaps were monitored frequently for archaeological material.

Results

Ground reduction

The groundworks comprised the stripping of overburden from much of the site to expose the top of the natural gravel geology. The excavation area comprised a zone of about 31.5m by 16m which was reduced to a depth of between 0.2m and 0.55m prior to the excavation of four rectangular footing trenches (Fig. 3; Pls 1 and 2). The stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.2m of topsoil overlying 0.32m of a mid brownish grey clayey silt subsoil (Fig. 4; Pl. 3). No deposits nor features of archaeological interest were observed at this level.

Footing trenches

Digging of the footing trenches was also observed. They measured 14.3m by 13.1m and were 0.6m wide and dug to a depth of c.2m (Pl. 4). No artefacts were recovered from the spoil from the evaluation trenches.

Finds

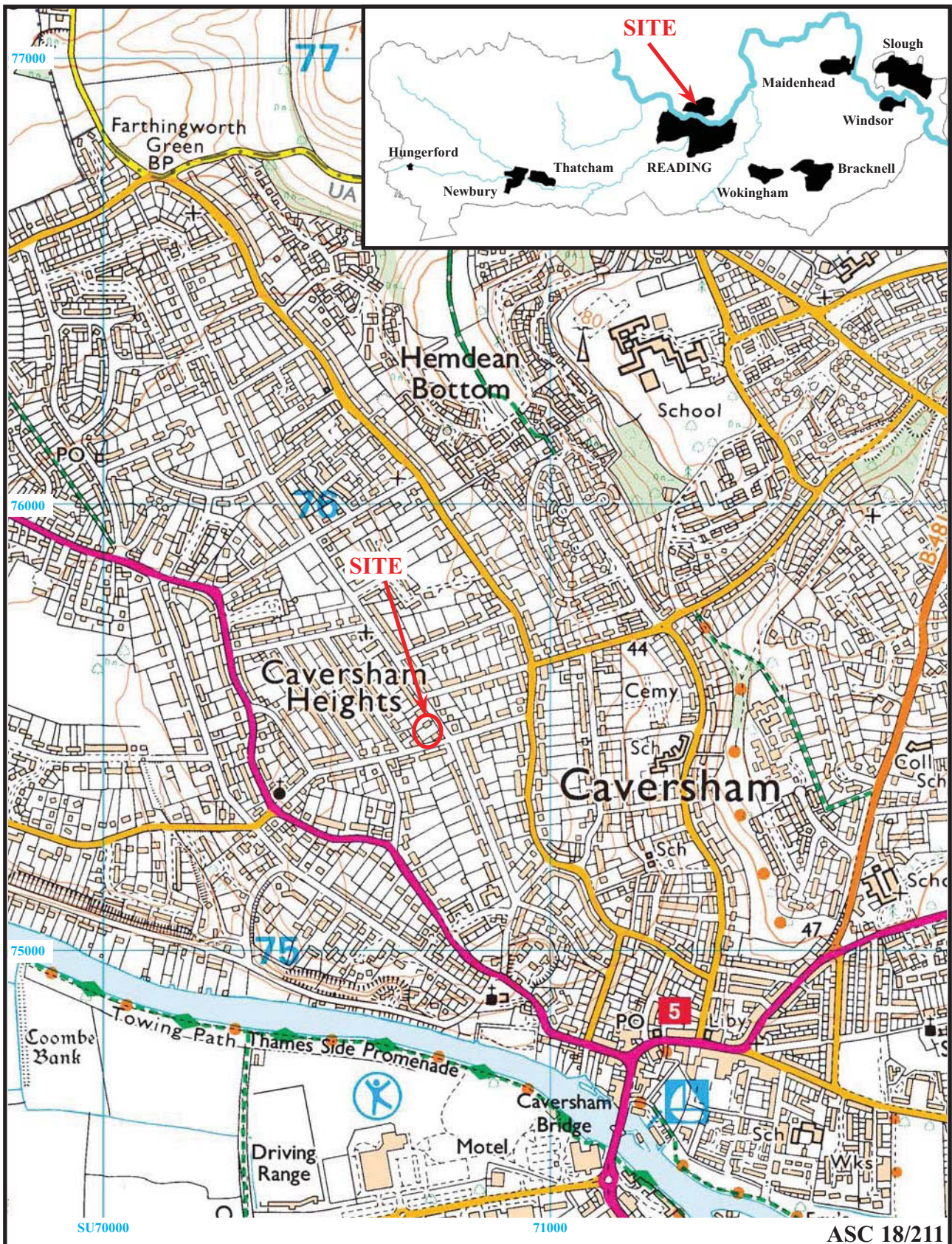
All artefacts encountered were of modern date and of no archaeological interest. They were retained on site.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeological remains to be present on this site and the good conditions for observing archaeological features cut into the top of the natural geology, no deposits nor finds of archaeological interest were observed. No Palaeolithic finds were recorded from examination of the spoil arising from excavation of the foundation trenches.

References

- BGS, 2000, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet **268**, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Booth, P, Dodd, A, Robinson, M and Smith, A, 2007, *The Thames through Time: The Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames: The early historical period AD1–1000*, Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr **27**, Oxford
- Ford, S, 1991, 'Mapledurham Golf Course, South Oxfordshire: Archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **91/5**, Reading
- Ford, S and Raymond F, 2013, 'A Late Bronze Age artefact scatter and medieval ditch on St Peter's Hill, Caversham', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **81**, 27–35
- Hull, G, 1998, 'Caversham Heath Golf Course (Mapledurham Golf Course-2, South Course, South Oxfordshire: an Archaeological evaluation' Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **97/82**, Reading
- Lambrick, G, Robinson, M and Allen, T, 2009, *The Thames through Time: The Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames: The Thames Valley in Later Prehistory: 1500BC–AD50*, Oxford Archaeol Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr **29**, Oxford
- Mycombe, C, 2006, 'Mapledurham Playing Fields: Prehistory on the Doorstep' *South Oxfordshire Archaeology Group Bulletin*, **61**, Woodcote
- Manisse P-D submitted, Roman Occupation At Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Berkshire, Berkshire Archaeol Journal,
- NPPF, 2018, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London
- Wymer, J, 1968, *Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology in Britain*, London



**45 Albert Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Caversham, Reading and Berkshire.

Reproduced under licence from Ordnance Survey Explorer Digital mapping at 1:12500
Crown Copyright reserved



ASC 18/211



ASC 18/211



**45 Albert Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Watching Brief**
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Albert Road.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:1250

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



ASC 18/211

**45 Albert Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Observations of area.



NNW

SSE

70m aOD

Topsoil (Reddish brown sandy silt with gravel)

formation level

Natural geology (gravel)
(Continued excavation with footings)

Base of footing

ASC 18/211

**45 Albert Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. Representative section.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 1. Stripped area to formation level in progress, looking North East



Plate 2. Completed strip for formation level, looking South East

ASC 18/211

**45 Albert Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 1 and 2.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 3. Section, showing reduction, looking North West, Scales: 1m and 0.5m



Plate 4. Excavation of footings looking South East

ASC 18/211

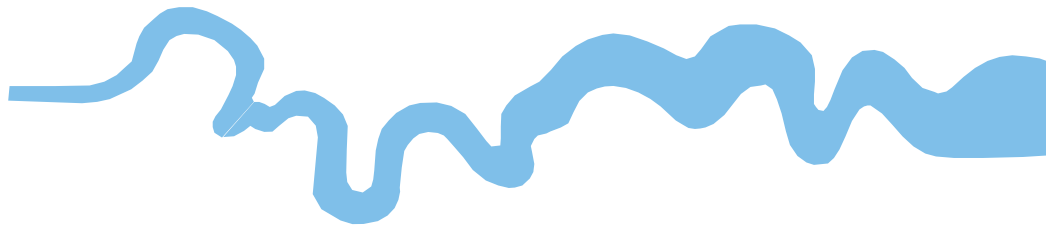
45 Albert Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 3 and 4.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

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





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

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**

***Offices in:
Brighton, Taunton, Stoke-on-Trent, Wellingborough
and Ennis (Ireland)***