

**7-8 Broadway, Thatcham,
West Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Atlantis Property Services Ltd**

by James Lewis
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code 7BT 08/28

May 2009

Summary

Site name: 7-8 Broadway, Thatcham, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 5174 6742

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 7th- 8th of May 2009

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James Lewis

Site code: 7BT08/28

Area of site: c.160sqm

Summary of results: Post-Medieval floor and early post-medieval or medieval wall.

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.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 18.05.09
	Steve Preston ✓ 18.05.09

7-8 Broadway, Thatcham, West Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 08/28

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 7-8 Broadway, Thatcham, West Berkshire (SU 5174 6742) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Atlantis Property Services Ltd, 23–24 Market Place, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2DE.

Planning consent (08/00037/con) has been gained from West Berkshire Council for the construction of new office and residential accommodation at 7-8 Broadway, Thatcham, West Berkshire. The consent is subject to a condition (4) which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in advance of development. It was determined that this was to comprise of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching, based on the results of which, a scheme could be devised to mitigate the effects of development on any archaeological remains that might be present. A record of the previous building on the site has also been carried out and will be the subject of a separate report.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and West Berkshire Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Duncan Coe, Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis on the 5th and 6th of May 2009 and the site code is 7BT08/28. 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 within the Kennet valley to the east of Newbury within the core of Thatcham town centre. The site fronts Broadway to the south east (Fig. 2). To the west, are offices and residential buildings. The site lies on a terrace of the River Kennet and the underlying geology consists of gravel (BGS 1947). The site is at 78m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site is derived from the location within the historic medieval core of Thatcham, on one of its major streets and adjacent to the site of the market (Astill 1978). The site also lies just south of the course of the Roman road from Silchester to Cirencester. The focus of the earlier Saxon town is thought to lie to the south, centred on the parish church, and both medieval and Saxon deposits have been recorded to the south of the church (Jenkins and Pine 2005; Pine 2007), although Horton (1979) has suggested that the focus of the Saxon settlement may have been located further east, closer to the Roman road. Documentary evidence also suggests the existence of a Saxon minster church in the vicinity (Astill 1978).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims were:

- to determine if archaeological relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits are present relating to use of the area in Late Saxon times;
- to determine if any deposits are present relating to the use of the area in medieval and post-medieval times; and
- to determine the nature of the growth and decline of the economy of the town in medieval and early post-medieval times.

Two trenches were to be excavated. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any archaeological deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

Two trenches were dug as intended in the locations shown on Figure 3. The trenches measured between 4-4.2m in length, 1.5m wide and between 1.2-1.4m deep. The machining was carried out by a mini-digger fitted with a

grading bucket and was supervised by an archaeologist. The spoil heaps were monitored and all archaeological deposits were hand cleaned and excavated.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 measured 4m in length and was aligned NE-SW and was between 1.2m to 1.4m deep. Due to subsidence caused by a burst water main this trench could not be entered safely, however a number of observations were made before the sides collapsed and flooded. In the south of the trench was a significant amount of black burnt cinder material which overlay brown sandy clay (similar to context 58, see below). The sandy clay appeared to be the fill of a large feature, possibly a quarry pit, however it was not bottomed and the sides of the feature were not observed. The depth of this feature was at least 1.4m in the northern part of Trench 1. No finds were recovered from Trench 1.

Trench 2 (Fig. 4; Plate 1)

Trench 2 was aligned NW-SE and measured 4.2m in length and was 1.2m deep. Within the trench two features were identified. The top layer (50) was loose demolition rubble 0.2m thick. This overlay between 0.4 to 0.5m of 19th/20th century made ground. To the north west a black and with cinders (51) overlay a shallow flat-based feature with a tiled floor (61) at the bottom. This comprised ten rows of hand made red tiles with dimensions of 0.23m in length, 0.12m wide and were 0.035m thick. These were edged by hand made red bricks which measured 0.23m in length, 0.11m wide and were 0.05m thick. The tile floor was above context 57 (see below). To the south east layer 51 was above laminated made ground (52-6).

Below the made ground across the whole of the trench was a brown sandy clay (57) which was 0.3m thick. This contained small pieces of tile and brick. This layer in turn overlay a soft brown silty sand (58) which was 0.2m thick and contained occasional small stone and gravel inclusions. Layer 58 overlay the remains of what is considered to be a wall foundation (59, Plate 2). The wall consisted of medium sized flint nodules and chalk lumps (c. 0.1m across) set within a bright orange sandy matrix. It extended from the eastern edge of the trench and continued for approximately 0.9m at which point it turned sharply north and carried on for another 0.9m where it finished, 0.2m before the north side of trench 2. The width of the feature varied between 0.5 to 0.9m. On the south western side of the wall two large flint nodules (c. 0.15m across) appeared to form part of the face of the wall proper. No dating evidence was retrieved from deposits associated with this feature. The wall

foundation appeared to be cut into the natural gravel geology at the base of the trench. Both the stratigraphically higher tiled floor and this wall were left in-situ.

Finds

One fragment of 19th century pottery recovered from made ground layer 51 was the only artefact recovered from the site.

Conclusion

The evaluation has confirmed the archaeological potential of the site. It has revealed the survival of both 19th/20th century and earlier structural deposits on a part of the site. One of the trenches (1) although flooded appears to indicate extensive and deep truncation with at least 1.4m of modern made ground present and below the level of the top of the natural geology in the adjacent trench. It is assumed that this is some sort of old quarry pit, backfilled in the late 19th century, but the presence of a cellar cannot be entirely discounted.

The other trench (2) revealed the remains of a late post-medieval tiled floor (61), but with an earlier structure (59) stratigraphically beneath. The tiled floor might relate to the 19th century use of the premises which was for a horse carriage works (T. Knott *pers comm.*). The date of the earlier structure (59) is unknown with no finds associated with it. However, its construction of flint and chalk and low stratigraphic position suggests that this feature may be of early post-medieval or even medieval date.

References

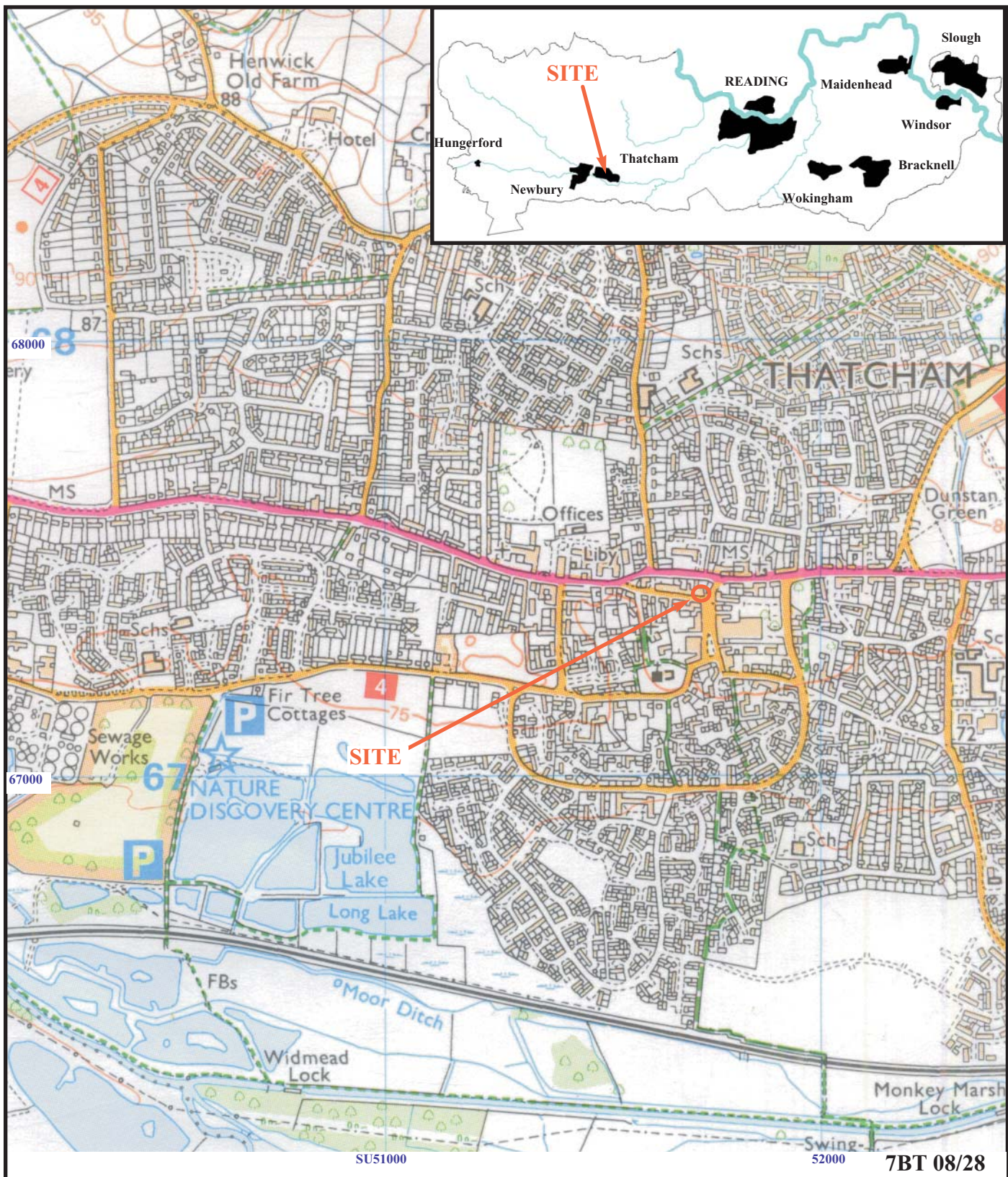
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	4m	1.5m	1.4m	Not recorded in detail due collapse and flooding. Natural geology was not encountered
2	4.2m	1.5	1.2m	0-0.2m rubble; 0.2-0.7m made ground; 0.7-1.0m brown sandy clay; 1.0-1.2m brown silty sand; 1.2m+ gravel natural geology. [Plates 1 and 2]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	60	59	Wall foundation	Medieval or early post-medieval?	Stratigraphic
2	61	-	Tiled Floor	Late Post-Medieval	Stratigraphic



**7 Broadway, Thatcham, West Berkshire, 2009
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Thatcham and Berkshire.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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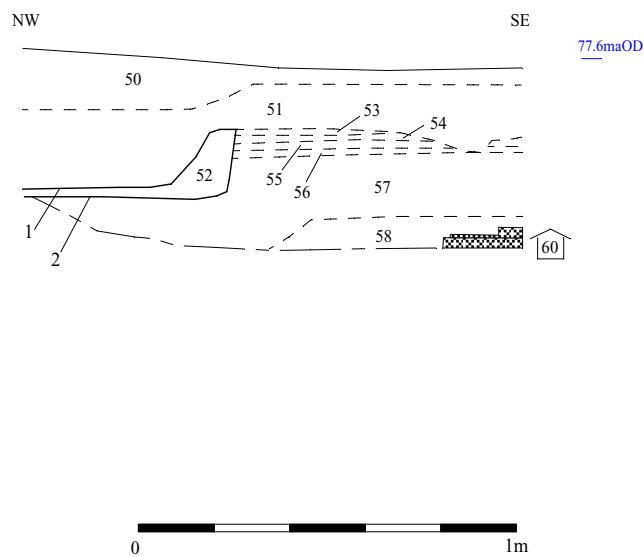
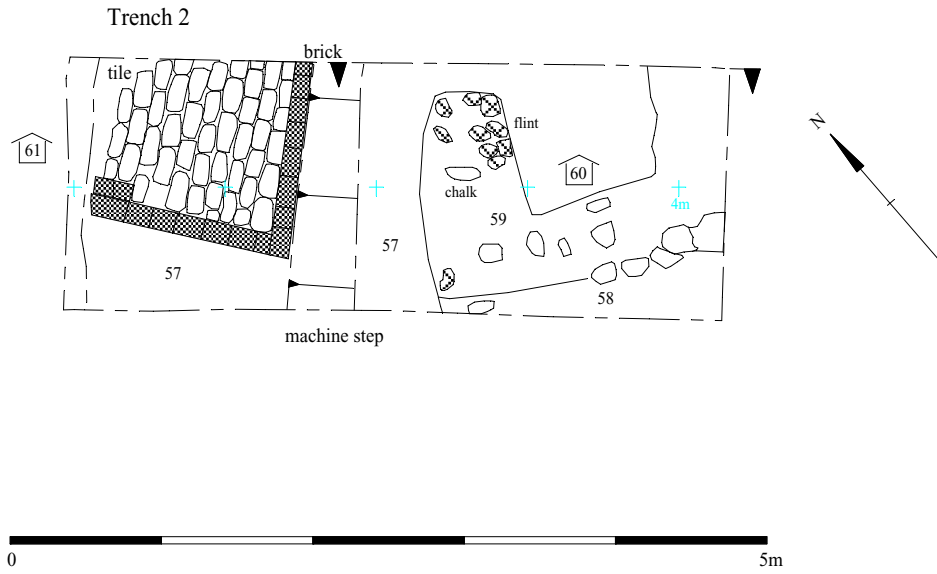


Figure 4. Detail of Trench 2.



Plate 1. Trench 2, looking north-east, surface 61 in foreground of trench, cuts 1 and 2 visible in section, scales, horizontal 2, vertical 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, wall 60, looking north west, scale 1m.