



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
17 AND LAND TO REAR OF 21-25
WESTERN AVENUE
WOODLEY
BERKSHIRE**

on behalf of TRY Homes Ltd



Calli Rouse BA PIFA

June 2006

ASC: 796/WWA/2

Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall,
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: office@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	WWA	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	796
<i>Accession No:</i>	TBC		
<i>County:</i>	Berkshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Woodley		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Woodley		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SU 7586 7376		
<i>Present use:</i>	Disused gardens		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	6 new dwellings with associated access and landscaping		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	F/2005/5039		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Wokingham District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	15 th June 2006		
<i>Client:</i>	Try Homes Limited (Thames Valley) Teal House Cowley Business Park Cowley Uxbridge Middlesex UB8 2AL		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Lee Norris		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Calli Rouse	<i>Date:</i>	22/06/2006
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<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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Figure 1: General location (*scale 1:25,000*)

Summary

On 15th of June 2006, ASC Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at 17 and land to the rear of 21-25 Western Avenue, Woodley, Berkshire, in advance of the construction of six new dwellings and associated access. Three connecting trenches were excavated within the footprint of the new development. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

1 Introduction

1.1 In June 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at 17 and land to the rear of 21-25 Western Avenue, Woodley, Berkshire (NGR SU 7586 7376: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Try Homes Limited (Thames Valley), and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2006), and a brief (Thomason 2006) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Wokingham District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Berkshire Archaeology*. The relevant planning application reference is F/2005/5039.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of six new dwellings with associated access and landscaping following the demolition of the existing No. 17 Western Avenue.

1.3 *Location*

The site is located within the civil parish of Woodley, at NGR SU 7586 7376 (Fig. 1). The development site is off Western Avenue, on the north western side of Woodley, which is itself located to the east of Reading.

1.4 *Description*

Access to the site is from Western Avenue, which runs on a north-north-east alignment, to the east of the site. The site itself consists of the gardens to the rear of No's 21 to 25, which are bordered by residential areas, and the dwelling and associated garden of No. 17. No. 17 is the only part of the site which is bounded by Western Avenue.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are in an unmapped urban area, but are likely to be of the *Hucklesbrook Association*, which are characterised as *well drained coarse loamy and some sandy soils, commonly over gravel. Some similar permeable soils affected by groundwater. Usually on flat land.* The underlying geology is described as *River terrace drift* (Soil Survey, 1983, 571w). The site lies at an elevation of c.54m AOD.



Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 6), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present.
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 7), which required:

- A 6% sample of the 0.2ha development area was excavated covering the footprint of the proposed build and access.
- All machine work was directly supervised by an archaeologist. Machining was stopped at the first archaeological deposit encountered or natural, whichever was encountered first.
- Spoil was scanned for artefacts, which were recorded and retained.
- Actual trench locations are shown in Figure 3.

2.4 Constraints

All three trenches were subject to adjustments due to the restrictions on site (Fig. 3). The eastern end of Trench 1 was curved slightly to the south, to avoid the existing garage. Trench 2 was repositioned due to the presence of a swimming pool that was not known about prior to arrival on site (Plate 6). The additional presence of a foul sewer within this trench meant that only part of the trench could be excavated to natural levels. Trench 3 was originally intended as a straight trench, but became kinked due to the presence of a concrete base.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 Archaeological remains are not currently known in the application area, but the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record notes a number in the surrounding area (Thomason, 2006).
- 3.2 The gravels of the Thames Valley are, in general, areas of high archaeological potential (Gates, 1975), but little large scale archaeological work has taken place in the Woodley area.
- 3.3 Excavations at Thames Valley Park, c.1.2km to the north west of the proposed development site, revealed evidence of human activity dating from the Mesolithic period through to the late Romano-British period (Barnes *et al*, 1997).
- 3.3 The settlement of Woodley has relatively recent origins, as it was not in existence at the time of the *Domesday Survey* (1086). However, the adjacent settlement of Earley is noted in the *Domesday Survey*, and has its origins in the Saxon period. This indicates that there has been activity within the vicinity of the proposed development site from at least the Saxon period.
- 3.4 A 16th century Grade II Listed building, known as Bulmershe Manor, is located c.320m away to the west of the development site (Thomason, 2006).

4 Results

- 4.1 Trench 1 (Plate 1) was located at the southern end of Trench 3, on an east-west alignment and measured 27.2m in length by 1.85m in width. The topsoil in this trench went down to a depth of 0.45m and was a rich dark brown (Context 102). It directly overlay the natural subsoil, which consisted of a silty gravel with moderate grey silty mottling (Context 101). A more uniformly grey area of natural soil was present in the southeastern corner of the trench. No finds or features were observed within this trench.
- 4.2 Trench 2 (Plate 2) was located towards the northern end of Trench 3, on the same alignment as Trench 1. It measured 13.4m in length and 1.85m in width. The natural soil (Context 201) was composed of a similar material as in Trench 1, and was beneath 0.3m of topsoil (Context 202). However, the natural was only reached at the extreme western end of the trench, as 0.6m wide foul sewer (Context 203) was uncovered running on a northwest-southeast alignment across the majority of the trench. The sewer trench was filled with a yellow brown gravelly clay (Context 204). No archaeological finds or features were observed within the trench.
- 4.3 Trench 3 was located at the western end of the proposed development, on a northeast-southwest alignment (Plate 3). It was 39.2m in length and 1.85m in width (Plate 4). The depth of the natural subsoil (Context 301) varied between 0.45m and 0.55m, and consisted of the same kind of material as Trench 1 and Trench 2. A modern land drain was noted 6.3m from the most northerly end of the trench (Plate 5). No other finds or features were observed within the trench.
- 4.4 *Conclusions*
No pre-modern finds or features were observed during the evaluation. The area where the natural subsoil was not reached in Trench 2 is unlikely to contain any archaeological remains, as the excavation of the foul sewer is likely to have already disturbed the ground here and destroyed any remains. Some minor disturbance had been caused by modern services, notably in Trench 2, but generally little disturbance had taken place. The occasional presence of isolated artefacts and features, away from the trenches cannot be entirely excluded, but it is unlikely that large amounts of archaeological remains are present on the site.
- 4.5 *Confidence Rating*
The evaluation was undertaken in dry and sunny conditions, and full co-operation was received from the contractors. Although the trenches had to be adapted from their original positions (see Section 2.4 above), it is unlikely that any remains were missed because of this, as the ground in these areas had already been subject to previous development. Therefore a high confidence rating is attached to this evaluation.



Plate 1: Trench 1, general view, looking north west



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking west



Plate 3: Trench 3, looking north east



Plate 4: Overall view of Trench 3, north east



Plate 5: Detail of drain Trench 3



Plate 6: Swimming pool, looking east

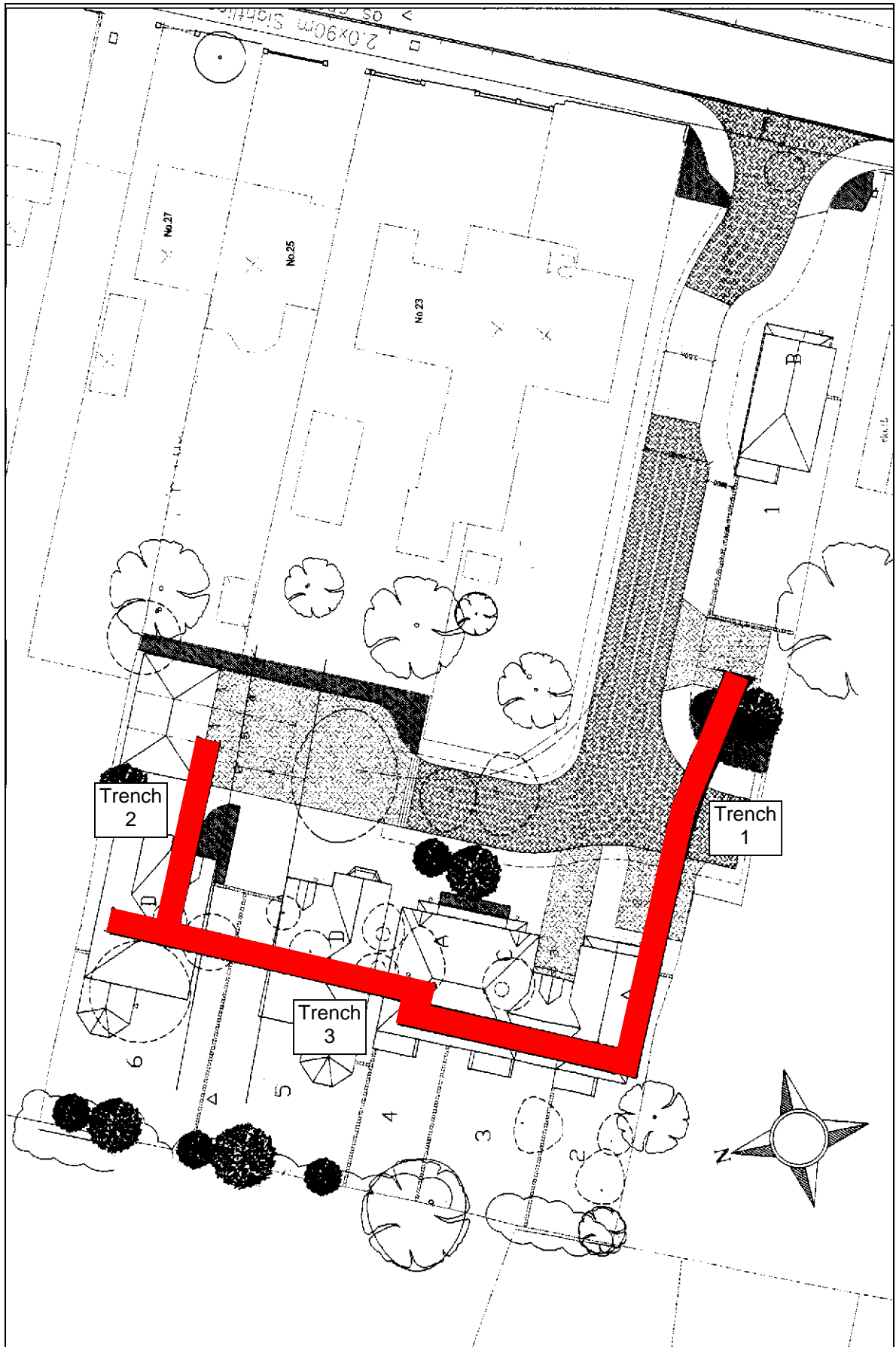


Figure 3: Revised trench location plan (scale 1:400)

5. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Try Homes Limited (Thames Valley) for commissioning the evaluation and David Thomason of Berkshire Archaeology for acting as curatorial monitor.

The fieldwork was undertaken for ASC Ltd by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA and David Fell BA MA MIFA. This report was prepared by Calli Rouse BA PIFA and edited by David Fell.

6. Archive

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. Site record drawings
7. List of photographs/slides
8. Colour slides
9. B/W prints & negatives
10. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with Reading Museum

7. References

Standards & Specifications

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition.* English Heritage (London).

IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct.*

IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds).*

Rouse, C 2006 *Project design for an Archaeological Evaluation at 17 and land to the rear of 21-25 Western Avenue, Woodley, Wokingham, Berkshire* ASC Ltd

Thomason D 2006 *17 and to the rear of 21-25 Western Avenue, Woodley: Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation* Berkshire Archaeology


Secondary Sources


Barnes I *et al* 1997 *Excavations at Thames Valley Park, Reading, 1986-88* Wessex Archaeology.


Gates, T 1975 *The Middle Thames Valley: An archaeological survey of the river gravels* Berkshire Archaeological Committee

Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	27.2	Width	1.85	Depth	0.45
	Levels					
	Trench base southwest		54.07m OD			
	Trench top southwest		54.66m OD			
	Trench base southeast		53.74m OD			
	Trench top southeast		54.18m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SE	76851 73767		NW	76828 73779	
	Orientation			Southeast-northwest		
Reason for Trench			Testing unknown area			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
101	Layer	Natural silty mottled grey gravel		-	-	450
102	Layer	Dark brown topsoil		-	-	-

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	13.4	Width	1.85	Depth	0.3
	Levels					
	Trench base southeast		54.13m OD			
	Trench top southeast		54.37m OD			
	Trench base northwest		54.08m OD			
	Trench top northwest		54.44m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SE	76853 73798		NW	76842 7380	
	Orientation			East-west		
Reason for Trench			Testing unknown area			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation		Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
202	Layer	Dark brown topsoil		-	-	-
204	Fill	Yellow brown gravelly clay		600	-	300
203	Cut	Linear sewer trench		600	-	300
201	Layer	Natural silty mottled grey gravel		-	-	300

Trench 3						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	39.2	Width	1.85	Depth	0.5
	Levels					
	Trench base north			54.02m OD		
	Trench top north			54.59m OD		
	Trench base south			54.07m OD		
	Trench top south			54.66m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	S	76828 73779		N	76840 73807	
	Orientation			Northeast-southwest		
Reason for Trench			Testing unknown area			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
302	Layer	Dark brown topsoil	-	-	-	
303	Cut	Land drain	-	-	500	
304	Fill	Yellow brown gravelly clay	-	-	500	
301	Layer	Natural silty mottled grey gravel	-	-	500	

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 17 & 1/r of 21-25 Western Ave, Woodley, Berks				SITE NO/CODE: 796/WWA
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			✓	General street frontage, looking west
2			✓	Existing site access, looking west
3			✓	Garage block, looking west
4			✓	Area of Trench 3 before excavation, looking west
5			✓	Working shot, looking north
6			✓	Working shot, looking north east
7	✓		✓	Trench 2 general view, looking west
8			✓	Swimming pool, looking east
9			✓	Trench 3, working shot, looking south
10			✓	Trench 2, looking west
11	✓		✓	Trench 3, looking north east
12			✓	Detail of drain Trench 3
13	✓		✓	Overall view of Trench 3, north east
14			✓	Trench 1, general view, looking north west
15	✓		✓	Trench 1, looking west

Appendix 3 : ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	An Archaeological Evaluation at 17 and land to the rear of 21-25 Western Avenue, Woodley, Berkshire					
Short Description:	On 15 th of June 2006, ASC Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at 17 and land to the rear of 21-25 Western Avenue, Woodley, Berkshire, in advance of the construction of six new dwellings and associated access. Three connecting trenches were excavated within the footprint of the new development. No archaeological finds or features were observed.					
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
	WB	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		None	
Current land use:	Gardens		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		No	
Monument type:	-		Monument period:		-	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Berkshire		OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)		SU 7586 7376	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	17 and land to the rear of 21-25 Western Avenue, Woodley, Wokingham, Berkshire					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	0.2ha		Height OD: (metres)		c.54	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	David Thomason		Project design originator:		Calli Rouse	
Project Manager:	David Fell		Director/Supervisor:		Jonathan Hunn	
Sponsor / funding body:	Try Homes Limited (Thames Valley)					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	15/06/06		End date:		15/06/06	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	Reading Museum (Accession no. TBC)		No finds			
Paper:			Brief/PD/Report/Record Sheets/Plans			
Digital:			CD with all digital files			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	An Archaeological Evaluation at 17 and land to the rear of 21-25 Western Avenue, Woodley, Berkshire					
Serial title & volume:	ASC/796/WWA/2					
Author(s):	Calli Rouse					
Page nos	1-18		Date:		22/06/2006	