

## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:  
9 BUCKINGHAM DRIVE  
EMMER GREEN  
READING  
BERKSHIRE**

*on behalf of Try Homes (Thames Valley) Ltd*



**Calli Rouse BA PIFA**

**May 2006**

**ASC: 805/EGB/2**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	EGB	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	805
<i>Event No:</i>	-	<i>Accession No:</i>	TBC
<i>County:</i>	Berkshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Emmer Green		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Reading unparished		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SU 7186 7591		
<i>Present use:</i>	Residential		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Demolition of existing house: construction of flats		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	04/01511/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Reading Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2006		
<i>Client:</i>	Try Homes Ltd (Thames Valley Region) Teal House Cowley Business Park Cowley Uxbridge Middx 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>	31/05/2006
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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

*In May 2006, Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd undertook a watching brief at 9 Buckingham Drive, Emmer Green, Reading, in advance of the construction of a block of flats. This work was required because the area surrounding the site has been deemed an area of archaeological interest as the site is situated on plateau gravel, which offers good potential for the recovery of Palaeolithic artefacts.. No archaeological finds or features were observed during the project.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In May 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at 9 Buckingham Drive, Emmer Green, Reading (NGR SU 7186 7591: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Try Homes (Thames Valley) Ltd, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Zeepvat, 2006), and a brief (Thomason, 2006) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Reading Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Berkshire Archaeology*. The relevant planning application reference is 04/01511/FUL.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief has been required as a planning condition under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the demolition of the existing building, and the construction of a block of flats (Fig. 3).

### 1.3 *Location*

The site is located at NGR SU 7186 7591, in Emmer Green, in the Borough of Reading (Fig. 1). It comprises a roughly diamond-shaped area of c.1200 sq. m, on the west side of Buckingham Drive, the B481 Caversham to Sonning Common road.

### 1.4 *Description*

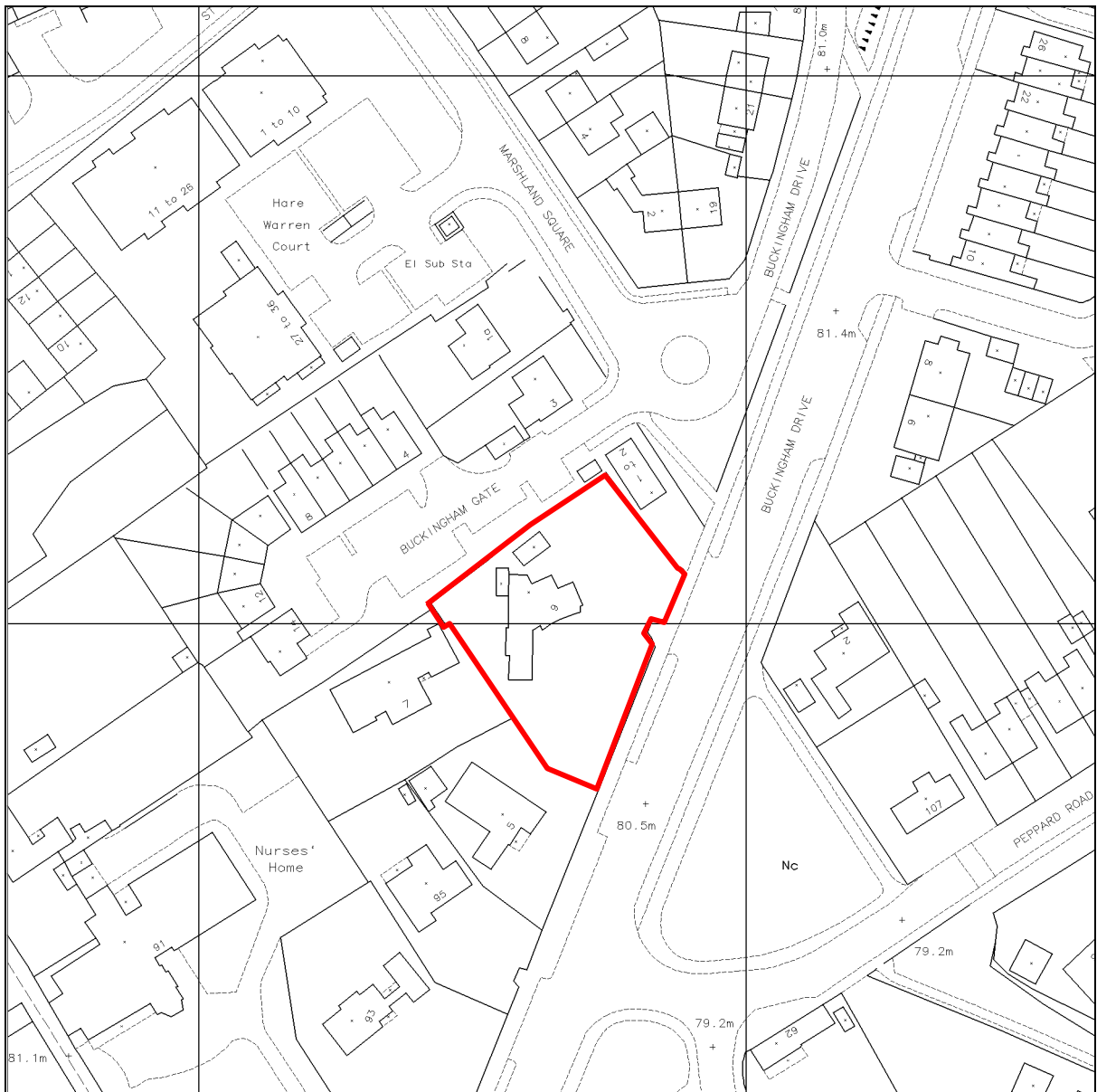
Until recently the site (Fig. 2) was in residential use, occupied by a single detached L-shaped house (now demolished) with mature gardens, and a large paved forecourt on the north side. The southern and north-western property boundaries are hedged, while the north-east side is fenced and the south-east side, facing the road, is walled. Access is by a gate on Buckingham Road. The clients have provided a plan showing manholes, telephone poles, etc, but service runs have not been accurately plotted.

### 1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site lies within the Reading conurbation, so soils have not been mapped, and are likely to have been modified. The brief notes that the site is located at c.81m AOD, over plateau gravel.

## 1.6 *Archaeological & Historical Background*

- 1.6.1 The area surrounding the site has been deemed an area of archaeological interest. A number of archaeological desk based assessments have been carried out in the area (*e.g* 70-72 Peppard Road, Marshbanks Square), which have highlighted the archaeological potential of the area. The site is situated on plateau gravel, which offers good potential for the recovery of Palaeolithic artefacts.
- 1.6.2 Three prehistoric handaxes were recovered from the gravel during the construction of Emmer Green School in 1951, and a collection of Palaeolithic artefacts of the Lavallois typology has been recovered from Balmore Drive. Neolithic and Bronze Age material has also been recovered from Sutton's Pit.
- 1.6.3 The site is situated to the north of the medieval settlements of Caversham and Reading, and during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the settlement at Emmer Green was associated with clay extraction pits and kilns. The latter were situated to the north of the site, which at the time of the 1882 edition Ordnance Survey map comprised open land.
- 1.6.4 Caversham Park, a stuccoed mansion built in the Palladian tradition was built in 1850-2 (Pevsner 1966) and is situated to the east of the site. The present B481 road is a 20<sup>th</sup> century creation and replaced a more sinuous route, which is now a minor road, passing the front of Caversham Park.



**Figure 2:** Site plan (scale 1:1250)

## **2 Aims & Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

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

- To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of the remains
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of the 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 the artefactual evidence present
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence was 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 5), which required:

- A qualified archaeologist monitored all areas of intrusive groundworks.



### **3 Results**

- 4.1 Four visits were made to the site between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2006, during which the excavation of the foundation trenches for a block of flats were observed. The existing building had been demolished prior to an archaeologist visiting the site (Plate 1).
- 3.2 The eastern half of the site was reduced by *c.*0.4m (Plate 2). The excavation of the eastern foundation trenches was observed (Plate 3). The trenches were *c.*0.8m deep and *c.*0.75m wide. The only evidence of previous human activity on the site consisted of re-deposited gravels, which were dated to the modern period by inclusions of garden pots and soakaways.
- 3.3 The foundation trenches in the central part of the site varied between 0.6m and 1.5m in depth, due to the fact that this area straddles the break of slope which divides the upper terraced area from the ground to the east, which is *c.*1.2m lower (Plate 4). The foundation trenches in this area varied between 0.6m and 1.5m in depth because of this. The only visible areas of disturbance consisted of dark patches with distinctly modern inclusions, such as slate, guttering or brick.

#### 2.4 *Conclusions*

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified during the course of this watching brief. It is unlikely that significant archaeological remains were disturbed by the works and the archaeological impact of the scheme is considered to have been negligible.



**Plate 1:** General view N after site clearance



**Plate 2:** Ground reduction view E



**Plate 3:** Foundations detail N



**Plate 4:** Foundations view N

## **4. Acknowledgements**

The writer is grateful to Try Homes (Thames Valley) Ltd for commissioning this work. The project was monitored by David Thomason of Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken for ASC by Jonathan Hunn PhD MIFA. This report was prepared by Calli Rouse BA PIFA, and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## **5. Archive**

5.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site Monitoring Sheets
6. Site record drawings
7. List of photographs/slides
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

5.2 The archive will be deposited with Reading Museum.

## 6. References

### *Standards & Specifications*

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

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

IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology.*

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

Zeepvat, R J 2006 *Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 9 Buckingham Drive, Emmer Green, Reading* ASC Ltd ASC/805/EGB/2

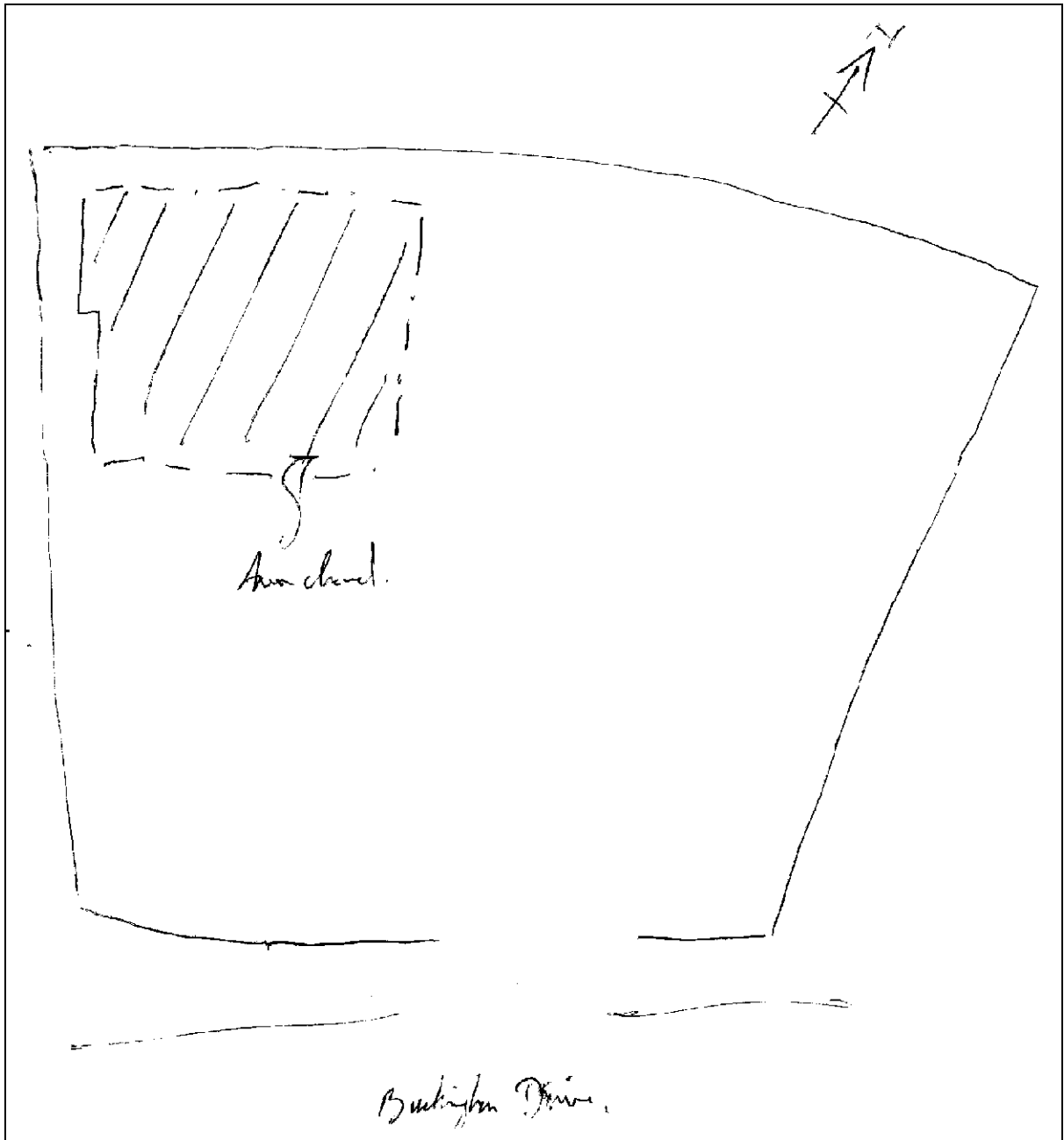
### *Secondary Sources*

Pevsner, N 1966 *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* Penguin

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

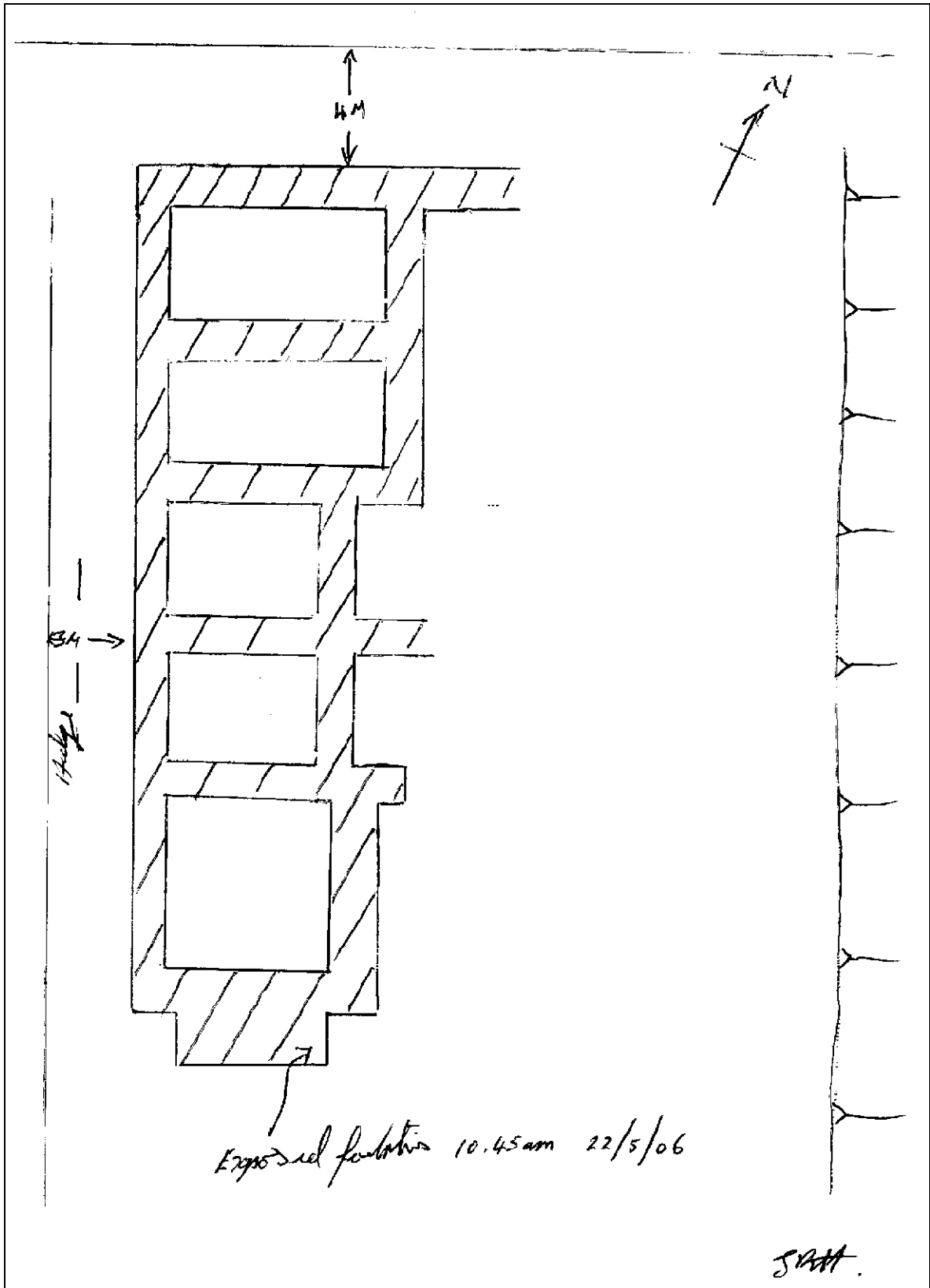


A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: 9, Buckingham Drive		Project No/Code: 805 1EGR	Sheet: 2 of 4			
Emmer Green, Reading		Date of visit: 18/5/06				
Client/Developer: Tony Homes						
Contact: Waldi Ptak			Phone: 07785-99559			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 7.55am		Finish: 11.45am			
Completed by: SRT						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Leveling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dull and wet.						
Observations: The NW side of the site has been cleared of its overburden, down to the natural gravel level. The SW side is only partly cleared and the gravel is blank. No artefacts or pre-modern features noted.						
Comments: Work has been delayed. Next visit - Monday.						

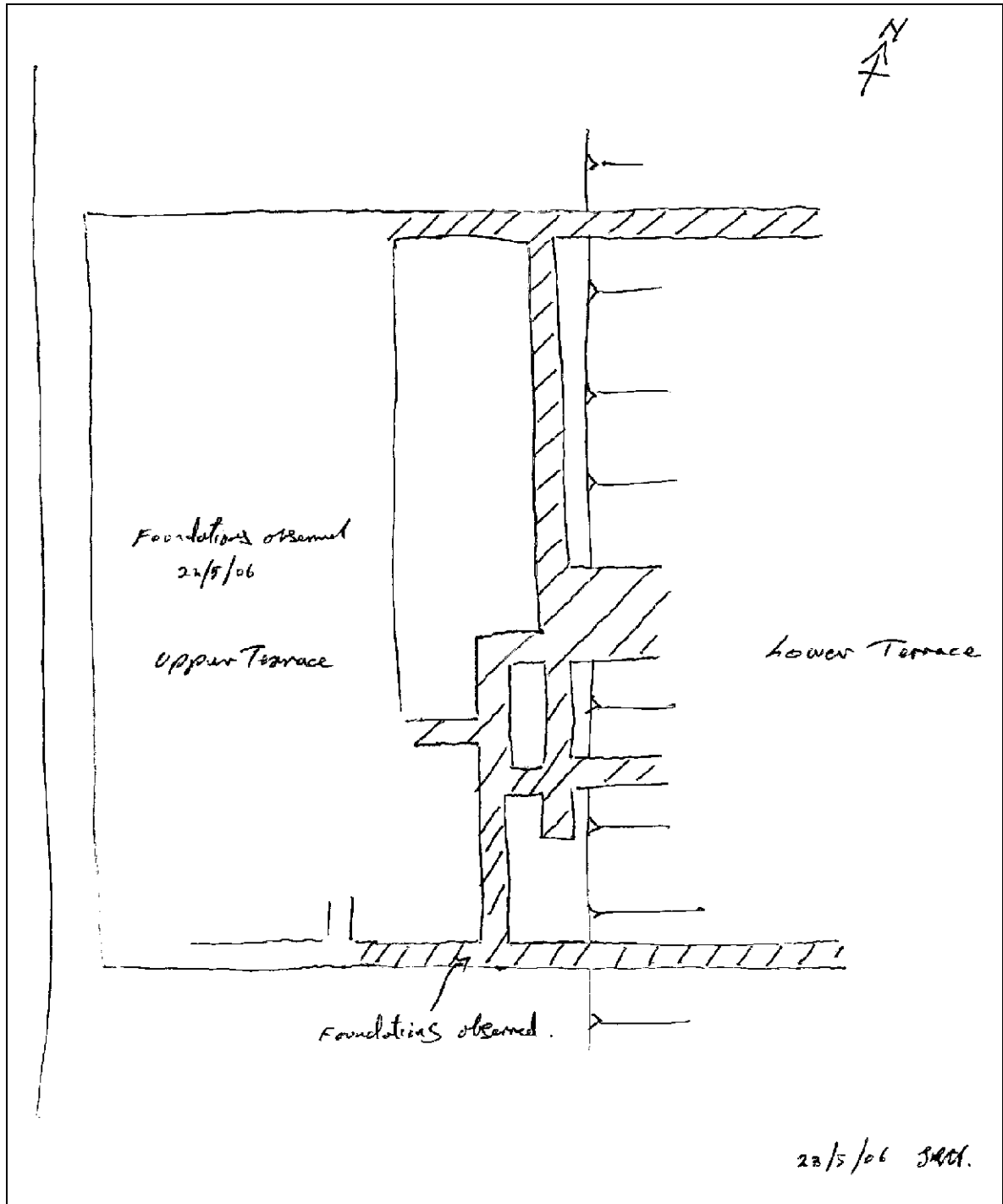








A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD		
Project: 9, Buckingham Drive Emmer Green, Reading		Project No/Code: 805 1 EGR	Sheet: 4 of 4	
Client/Developer Troy Homes		Date of visit: 23/5/06		
Contact: Waldi Crookson		Phone: 07785-995559		
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 7.56 am	Finish: 11.58 am		
Completed by: JKT				
Development Type:				
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying
				Pipelines
				Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Dry and Sunny but damp underfoot				
Observations: Observed the contour area of the footings which straddles the break of slope that divides the upper terraced area, which is about 1.2m higher than the ground to the east. About 90% of lower terrace area can clearly be seen to consist of natural gravels. The contour foundations vary between 0.6m and 1.50m in depth (W to E); 95% are a natural silty gravel. The darker patches are all modern features which contain the odd slate, guttering or brick. No signs of pre-modern activity.				
Comments: After the heavy rain the spoil heaps have been inspected and no artefacts observed.				



## Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 9 Buckingham Drive, Emmer Green, Reading				SITE NO/CODE: 805/EOR
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			✓	General view N after site clearance
2			✓	General view N after site clearance
3			✓	General view S
4			✓	General view SE
5			✓	General view W
6			✓	General view NW after site clearance
7			✓	General ground reduction N
8			✓	General ground reduction W
9			✓	Ground reduction S
10			✓	Ground reduction view E
11			✓	Test pit by side gate
12			✓	Detail of foundations N
13			✓	Details of foundations N
14			✓	Foundations detail N
15			✓	Foundations general view N
16			✓	Foundations looking N
17			✓	Foundations view N
18			✓	Foundations view S
19			✓	Ground reduction view SE
20			✓	Lower terrace clearance view W
21			✓	Machining May 22nd
22			✓	Machining may 23rd
23			✓	Foundations view N May 23rd
24			✓	Terracing W
25			✓	Terracing SW
26			✓	Site entrance N
27			✓	Site entrance detail N
28				
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### Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	9 Buckingham Drive, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire					
Short Description:	<i>In May 2006, Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd undertook a watching brief at 9 Buckingham Drive, Emmer Green, Reading, in advance of the construction of a block of flats. This work was required because the area surrounding the site has been deemed an area of archaeological interest as the site is situated on plateau gravel, which offers good potential for the recovery of Palaeolithic artefacts.. No archaeological finds or features were observed during the project.</i>					
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
	<u>WB</u>	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		None	
Current land use:	Domestic		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 7186 7591	
District:	Emmer Green		Parish:		Reading unparished	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	9 Buckingham Drive, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	-		Height OD: (metres)		c.81m	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	David Thomason		Project design originator:		Bob Zeepvat	
Project Manager:	Jonathan Hunn		Director/Supervisor:		Bob Zeepvat	
Sponsor / funding body:	Try Homes Ltd (Thames Valley Region)					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2006		End date:		23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2006	
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:	Watching Brief at 9 Buckingham Drive, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire					
Serial title & volume:	ASC Report 805/EGR/2					
Author(s):	Calli Rouse BA PIFA					
Page nos	1-20		Date:		31 <sup>st</sup> May 2006	