

# Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION:  
WAINGELS COLLEGE  
WOODLEY  
READING  
BERKSHIRE**

NGR: SU 7720 7450

*on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council*



Jonathan R Hunn BA PhD MIFA

August 2009

ASC: 1179/RWC/2



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



## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	RWC	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1179
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-66671	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Berkshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Woodley		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Woodley		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SU 7720 7450		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	11 ha		
<i>Present use:</i>	Secondary school		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Demolition of existing buildings and construction of four new entrance and teaching blocks		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	F/2008/1844		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Wokingham Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	June 30 <sup>th</sup> 2009		
<i>Client:</i>	Wokingham Borough Council Property Services PO Box 151 Shute End Wokingham Berkshire RG40 1WH		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mr Mark Holland		

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Jonathan Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	September 2009
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>	Bob Zeepvat	<i>Date:</i>	September 2009

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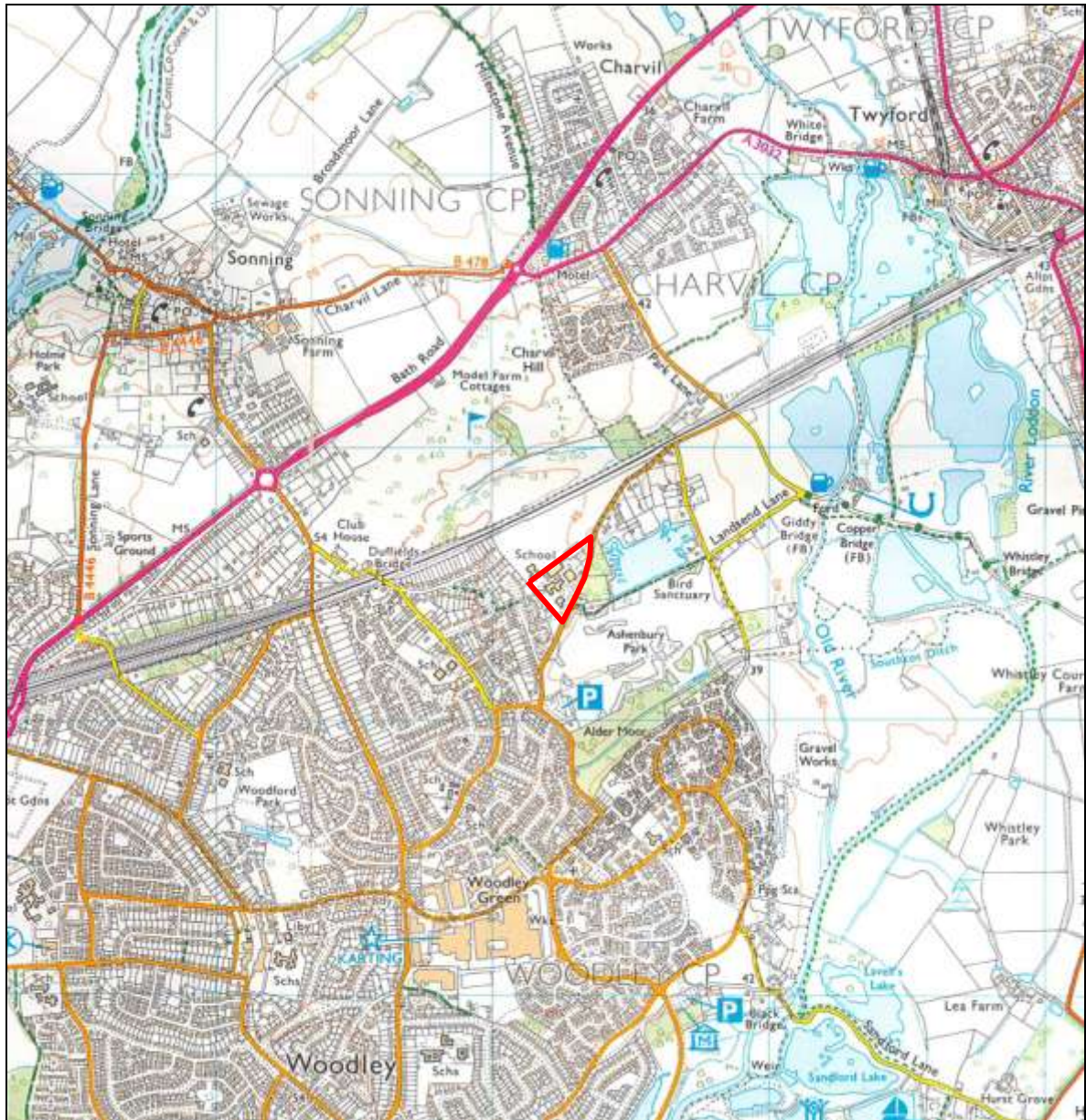
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**Figure 1:** General location shown in red (Scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*In summer 2009 archaeological investigations were undertaken at Waingels College, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire, during redevelopment of the site. The work comprised observation of a number of machine cut trenches located across the proposed new building locations and, where available, examination of newly excavated foundation and service trenches. Apart from establishing the depth of the existing gravel and character of the overburden, no archaeological features were identified or artefacts recovered.*

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Between June and September 2009 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out archaeological investigations at Waingels College, Woodley, Berkshire. The project was commissioned by *Willmott Dixon*, acting on behalf of *Wokingham Borough Council*, and was carried out according to a brief (RPS 2008) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Wokingham Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA) *Berkshire Archaeology*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Fell 2009). The relevant planning application reference is F/2008/1844.

#### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This investigation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

#### 1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

*Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

#### 1.4 *Management*

The project was managed by Alastair Hancock BSC PGDIP MIFA.

#### 1.5 *The Site*

##### 1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The site is in Woodley, in the administrative district of Wokingham, Berkshire. It is situated to the north of Woodley town centre, on the west side of Waingels Road, and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 7720 7450 (Fig. 1).

The site occupies a triangular plot of land of 11ha, bounded to the north by the Great Western main line railway, to the west by a housing estate, and to the southeast by Waingels Road. The school buildings, car parks and tennis courts are located on the southern part of the site, the rest of the land comprising

playing fields (Fig. 2). The area to be affected by the development is limited to the southern part of the site and covers c.3 ha.

#### 1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The natural soils of the area comprise the *Hucklesbrook Association*, namely well drained coarse loamy and sandy soils, over gravel (Soil Survey 1983, 571w). The underlying geology comprises 3rd (Taplow) and 4<sup>th</sup> (Lynch Hill) terrace gravels, over London Clay (BGS, Sheet 268). The terrain is flat and lies on the 45m contour (AOD).

#### 1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The development comprises demolition of the existing school buildings and the construction of four new structures with strip footings c.900mm deep (Fig. 3).

### 1.6 *Previous Archaeological Investigations*

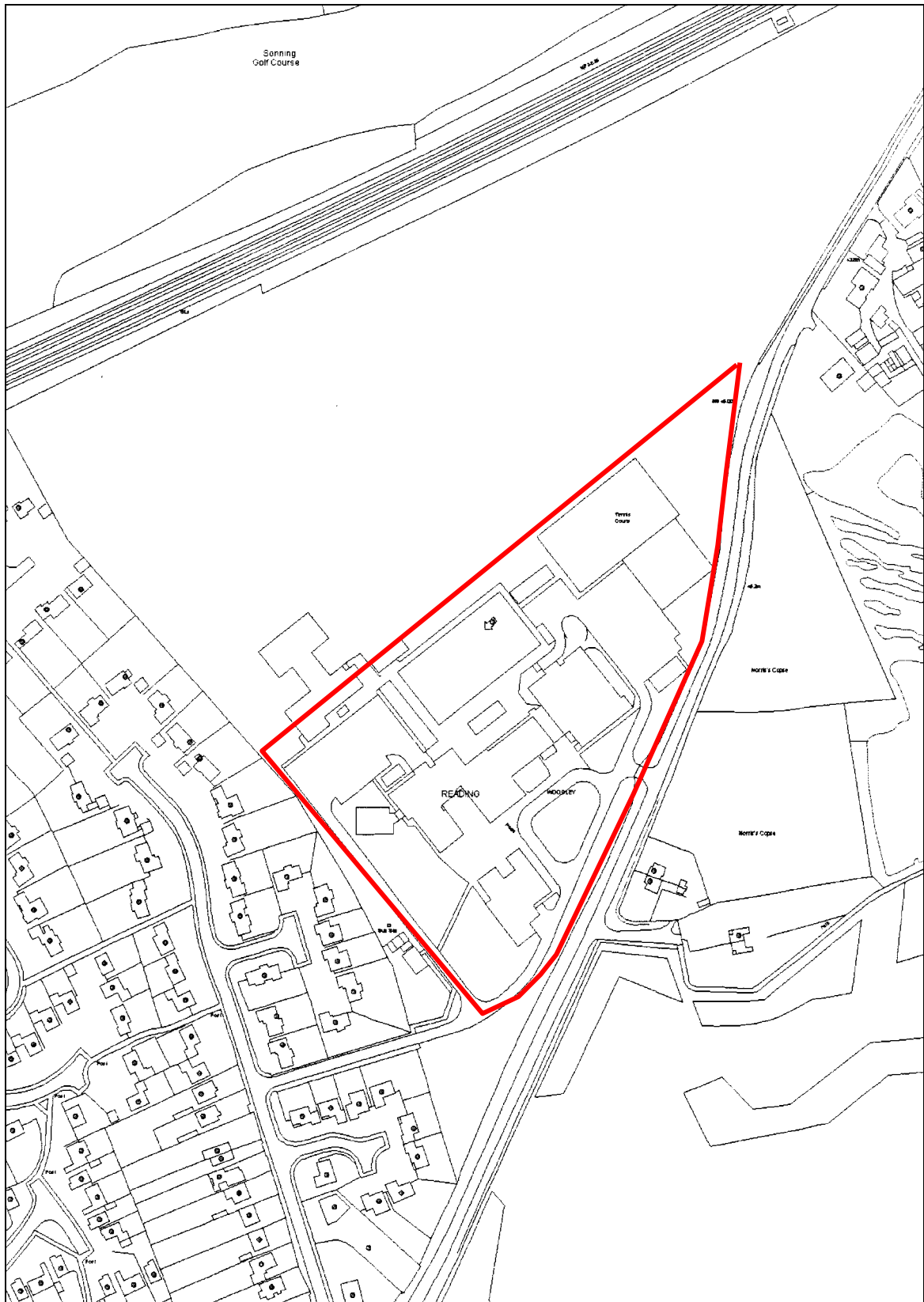
Following an initial desk-based assessment (LeQuesne 2007), a trial trench evaluation of the Waingels College site was undertaken in 2008 (RPS 2008: Brown 2008). As the site was still in use, trenching was limited to a small sample of the proposed development area. The evaluation trenches revealed no significant archaeology.

Because of the limited nature of the evaluation, the AA requested that a watching brief be carried out during groundworks for the four new buildings. A project design for this was prepared (Fell 2009a) and approved by the AA.

An initial visit to the site was made on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April when discussion took place between David Fell (ASC), Mary O'Donoghue (AA) and Ayo Allu and Neil Fox (Wilmott Dixon). It was agreed that, due to the extended nature of the construction timetable, it would be more appropriate to excavate evaluation trenches across the footprints of the new buildings, following demolition of each existing building. This was confirmed by *Wilmott Dixon* in an email from Ayo Allu dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009. A revised project design was prepared by ASC (Fell 2009b) and approved by the AA.

Following completion of trenching for the first two buildings, and commencement of trenching for the third, it became apparent that the site had probably been too truncated to reveal anything of archaeological significance. With the agreement of the AA, subsequent work on the third building was confined to the observation of footing and service trenches. The area of the fourth building was not examined.





**Figure 2:** Site plan (scale 1:2,000)

## 2. Aims & Methods

### 2.1 *Aims*

In line with the requirements of the AA, the aims of the investigation were:

- To determine the existence or absence of any archaeological remains. Should such remains be found, to ensure their ‘preservation by record’ to the highest possible standard
- 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 assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape.
- To determine the implications of the remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity.
- 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 may be present.

### 2.2 *Standards*

The work conformed to the requirements of the AA, 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 project design (Fell 2009b), which required:

- Soil and overburden to be stripped under archaeological supervision
- Inspection of sub-soil deposits for archaeological features
- Rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits
- Subsoil stripping under archaeological supervision
- Examination of any service and foundation trenches and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological deposits
- Rapid examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving and publication

### 2.4 *Constraints*

The principal constraint was the continuing use of the site as an educational facility and the need to maintain existing services. Due to the density of buried services the outline scheme for the location of the trial trenches had to be modified, as described in paragraph 1.6.



### 3. Archaeological & Historical Background

#### 3.1 *General*

The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from the desk-based assessment (LeQuesne 2007), the evaluation (Brown 2008) and other readily available sources.

#### 3.2 *Early Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

The Lynch Hill and Taplow terraces have produced extensive Palaeolithic faunal remains and assemblages of flint tools. These have been recorded both in the Woodley area and elsewhere in the Thames Valley (LeQuesne 2007). Notably, groups of hand axes found at Norris Green immediately southeast of the site. Two Middle Palaeolithic tools and a Mesolithic tranchet axe have been found during creation of Sonning golf course, to the north of the site.

There is also evidence of Neolithic activity in the area and an assemblage of material of this date has been recorded in features seemingly concentrated around a stream running through a valley immediately north of the railway line, close to the north side of the school (LeQuesne 2007). Further Neolithic pottery has been recorded near Park Lane.

Excavations on Park Lane revealed the presence of Neolithic and early Bronze Age pottery and the possible presence of Middle-Late Bronze Age field system was also identified. A middle-late Bronze Age enclosure within which was found a number of ‘burnt mounds’ was been identified c.0.5km east of the site.

#### 3.3 *Iron Age & Roman* (600BC-AD450)

A large number of sites of the Iron Age and Roman periods are known in this area of the Thames Valley (e.g. Barnes *et al* 1997; Moore & Jennings 1992). Such sites are often identified from the air as ‘cropmarks’ and a number of such sites have been identified in the area surrounding the site (LeQuesne 2007, fig. 1) indicating that the river terraces were probably extensively settled during these periods.

Settlement in the area during the Roman period was dominated by the civitas capital of *Calleva* (Silchester) which was situated c.15km southwest of the site. No major Roman roads are known from the area, but the river Thames was probably an important communications route during this period.

Little is known in detail of the site and the surrounding area during these periods, but Iron Age and Roman pottery sherds have been recorded from a garden immediately to the east of the school grounds. The excavations at Park Lane revealed a Roman field boundary ditch.

### 3.4 **Saxon and Medieval** (c.450-1500)

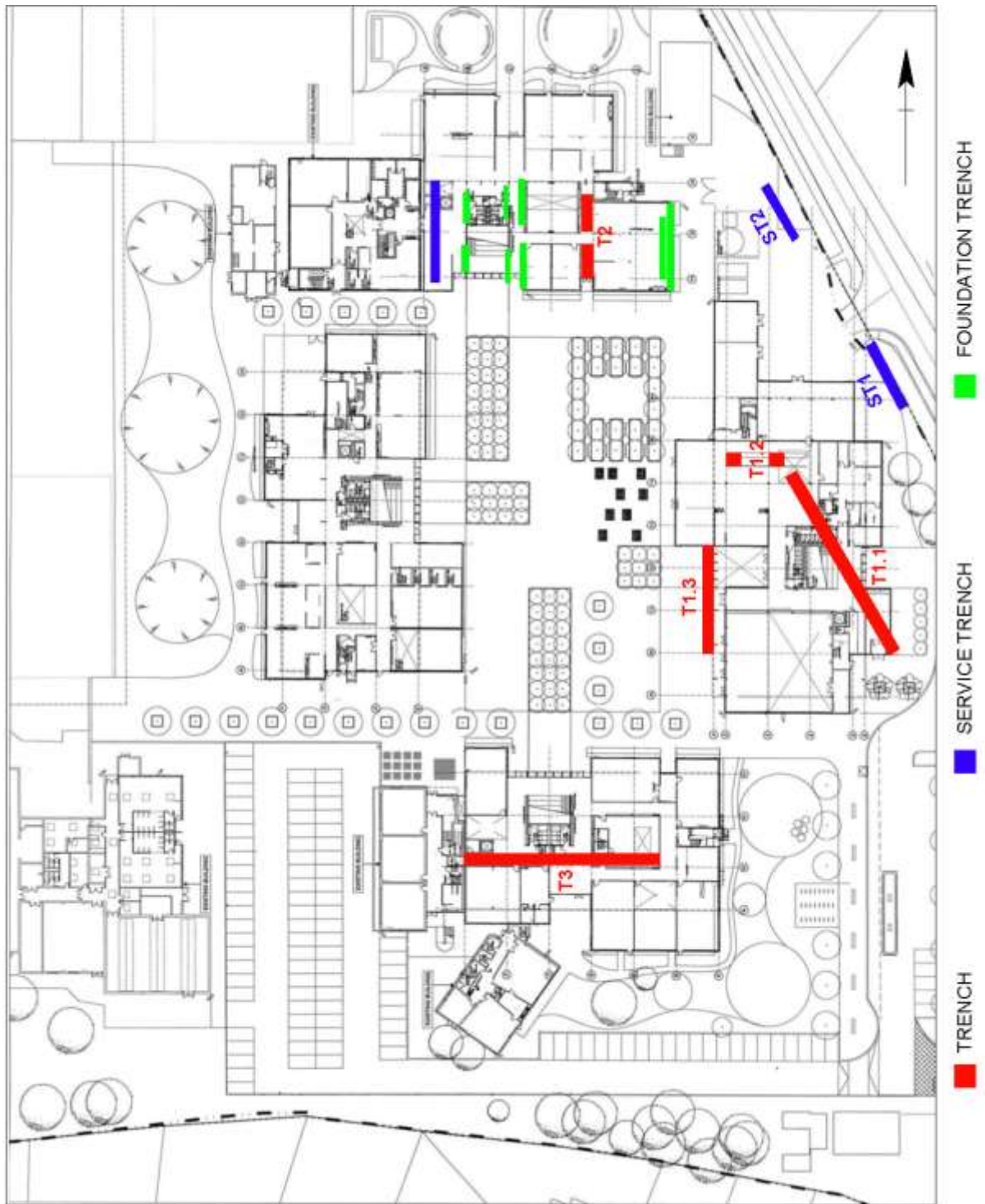
There are no known Saxon remains from the area, but the settlement at Sonning may have originated during this period. During the medieval period the site probably formed part of the open field system of Sonning and traces of ridge and furrow cultivation strips have been observed c.250m east of the site.

### 3.5 **Post-Medieval** (1500-1900)

Waingels Road was in existence by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and is shown on the enclosure map of Sonning (1818). The Great Western Railway was constructed between 1836 and 1840 and forms the north boundary to the site. The 1870 edition Ordnance Survey map shows the site as open ground and the northeastern half of site comprised woodland and was labelled 'Waingel Copse'.

### 3.6 **Modern** (1900-present)

Reading expanded during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the area to the west of the site was developed for housing from the 1920s. The site lies beyond the east side of the residential area and, during the Second World War, may have been used for storage by the Miles aircraft factory. An area of hardstanding was observed during the recent construction of the Weeks block at the northeastern corner of the main complex of school buildings (LeQuesne, 2007), which may date to this period. The college was constructed and opened in 1970.



**Figure 3:** Location of trenches, foundation & service trenches observed

## 4 Results

### 4.1 General

Detailed information regarding the trial trenches and their contents appears in Appendix 1.

Due to the presence of a range of service runs, and the working conditions of the present site it was deemed impractical to excavate a single evaluation trench across Building 1, as originally proposed. Accordingly, three separate trenches were excavated (Fig. 3: T1.1 - T1.3), amounting to a total length of 40m. For the same reason, two short trenches (T2) were dug within Building 2, and four sections of open footing and service trenches were inspected (Fig. 3). Service trenches on either side of the college entrance (ST1, ST2) were also monitored.

### 4.2 Building 1

#### Trench 1.1 (Plate 1)

This was located in the forecourt of the present building complex and was 20.3m long by 2.1m wide, orientated NNE. Its length was constrained by fibre optic cable ducts to the south and north. It was excavated to a depth of 600mm. The upper 150mm comprised topsoil; beneath was a brown silty clay 350mm thick, overlying natural sandy gravel (100mm depth was removed). It partly crossed an earlier evaluation trench (Brown 2008, trench 2) and was similarly devoid of any evidence for pre-modern activity.

#### Trench 1.2

This was situated to the northern end of T1.1 and was only 6m in length, due to the presence of a large drainage pipe. It was 500mm deep and was excavated down to the natural gravel. No pre-modern features were encountered.

#### Trench 1.3

This was located on the alignment of a deep service run which was being excavated on the western side of the forecourt area. It was 14.1m long and 2.1m wide, and was excavated down to natural gravelly clay. Only modern service cuts were present, and the trench was devoid of any significant archaeology. The subsequent service trench on the same alignment revealed only c.2m depth of sand and gravel deposits.

### 4.3 Building 2

Investigations consisted of one trial trench (T2), five parallel foundation trenches and one service trench run. These were all orientated north-south.

#### Trench 2 (Plate 2)

The trial trench was reduced to only 10m in length and realigned in order to avoid existing foundations and services. A central portion was left unexcavated due to the presence of a fibre optic cable. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.5m below the existing reduced level down onto predominantly silty gravel with occasional patches of sand. No features were observed.

### **Foundation Trenches**

Five foundation trenches, each 10m long, were observed. All were about 0.8m deep and c.0.65m wide. The upper 0.5m consisted of silty clay and gravel matrix over the natural horizon, which comprised sandy, silty gravel. No features were observed.

### **Service Trench**

On the north side of Building 2 an 8m length of service trench was examined. It was 1.4m deep by 1.0m wide, and was partly shored. The stratigraphy exposed was almost identical to that in the foundation trenches, described above. The water table was encountered about 1.8m below ground level. No features were observed.

## **4.4 Building 3**

### **Trench 3**

This was a single trial trench orientated east-west. It was 25m long by 2.1m wide and about 0.4m deep. At this level it encountered natural sandy, silty gravel. At the northern end of the trench a 16m sq. area had been reduced which exposed the natural gravely parent material of the local soils (Plates 3, 4). No features were observed.

## **4.5 Service Trenches**

### **ST 1**

To the south of the former entrance to the college, excavation of a service trench of about 15m was observed. As it presented one of the few undisturbed soil profiles it was recorded. Below the tarmac (80mm thick) was a foundation layer of loose stone chips (100mm thick). Below this was a dark greyish brown sandy silt c.370mm thick, followed by a further deposit of mottled, light greyish, rust flecked grave overlying a undisturbed yellow sand. No man made features were encountered.

### **ST 2**

To the north of the former entrance a service trench c.10m long and 3.5m deep was examined. Beneath c.500mm of overburden was gravel to a depth of 2.57m, overlying grey London clay. No man made features were observed.



**Plate 1:** Trench 1 looking north



**Plate 2:** Overall view of Trench 2 looking north





**Plate 3:** Overall view of trench 3 looking east



**Plate 4:** View of cleared area to north of T.3 looking south east



## 5. Conclusion

The initial phase of this project did not identify any archaeological features, and this was confirmed by subsequent described in this report. While the existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features were present on the site. It is unlikely that the development has had a significant impact on the archaeological remains of the area due to previous truncation of the college site.

## 6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by *Willmott Dixon*, acting on behalf of *Wokingham Borough Council*. The writer is grateful to Neil Fox (Senior Building Manager) for his assistance. The project was monitored on behalf of the local planning authority by Mary O'Donoghue of Berkshire Archaeology, to whom the author is grateful for her professional and pragmatic approach.

The project was managed for ASC by Alastair Hancock BSc PgDip MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA, who also prepared the report, which was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

## 7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs
7. Original specialist reports and supporting information
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Reading Museum*.

## 8. References

### *Standards & Specifications*

- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. English Heritage (London).
- Fell D 2009a *Waingels College, Woodley, Berkshire: Project Design for Watching Brief*. ASC doc. ASC/1179/RWC/1 (issued 20/04/2009).
- Fell D 2009b *Waingels College, Woodley, Berkshire: Project Design for Watching Brief*. ASC doc. ASC/1179/RWC/1 (revised 23/04/2009).
- IFA 2000a Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2001 Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- RPS 2008 *Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation/Mitigation of Redevelopment of Waingels College, Woodley, Berkshire*. RPS Planning & Development

### *Secondary Sources*

- Barnes I, Butterworth C A, Hawkes J W & Smith L, 1997 *Excavations at Thames Valley Park, Reading, 1986-88. Prehistoric & Romano-British Occupation of the Floodplain and a Terrace of the River Thames*. Wessex Archaeology Report **14**. Wessex Archaeology.
- Brown R, 2008 *Archaeological Evaluation: Waingels College, Waingels Road, Woodley, Berkshire*. ASC rep. **1128/RWC/1**.
- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- LeQuesne C 2007 *Waingels College, Waingels Road, Woodley, Berkshire. Desk-Based Assessment of Archaeological Potential*. RPS Planning & Development
- Moore J & Jennings D, 1992 *Reading Business Park. A Bronze Age Landscape*. Thames Valley Landscapes. The Kennet Valley **1**. Oxford Archaeology
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).

## Appendix 1: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Waingels College, Woodley, Berkshire			SITE NO/CODE: 1179/RWC
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		8820	General view of site looking south west (cover)
2		8821	View NE along course of service trench
3		8822	Section in service trench looking obliquely south (impaired by dust)
4		8823	Detail of soil profile in service trench (impaired by dust)
5		8825	Machining operation underway of T.1 looking north
6		8826	Location of new service trench in front of existing college
7		8827	Detail of underlying geology in service trench looking south
8		8828	View NE along axis of Trench 3
9		8829	View NW along axis of Trench 2
10		8830	Location of Trench 2 looking north east
11	Yes	8831	View north along axis of Trench 1 ( <b>Plate 1</b> )
12		8832	View NNE across Trench 1 in relation to its locality
13		8833	Detail of soil profile in Trench 1 looking east
14		8834	Detail of northernmost service trench
15		9477	Machining underway in Trench 2 looking north
16	yes	9478	T2 overall view looking north ( <b>Plate 2</b> )
17		9479	Detail of topsoil and gravel in T2.
18		9480	Ditto
19		9481	Ditto
20		9482	Location of T2 and adjacent foundation
21		9483	Close up of foundation
22		9484	Detail of square foundation
23		9485	Detail of foundation section
24		9486	Ditto
25		9487	Ditto
26		9488	Overall view of Block 2 looking west
27		9489	Detail of foundation section
28		9490	Ditto
29		9491	Location of foundation
30		9492	Detail of location of foundation
31		9493	Location shot
32		9494	Close up of foundation
33		9495	Location of service trench
34		9496	Detail of section in trench
35		9497	Ditto
36	yes	9498	Overall view of T3 looking ESE ( <b>Plate 3</b> )
37		9499	Close up of above
38		9500	Looking SE showing relationship of cleared area with T3 ( <b>Plate 4</b> )
39		9501	View SE showing relationship of cleared area with T3
40		9502	ditto

## Appendix 3 ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Waingels College, Woodley, near Reading, Berkshire		
Short Description:	<i>In summer 2009 archaeological investigations were undertaken at Waingels College, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire, during redevelopment of the site. The work comprised observation of a number of machine cut trenches located across the proposed new building locations and, where available, examination of newly excavated foundation and service trenches. Apart from establishing the depth of the existing gravel and character of the overburden, no archaeological features were identified or artefacts recovered.</i>		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Watching brief		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	none	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	Evaluation: Brown 2008
Current land use:	School premises	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	Not known
Monument type:	none	Monument period:	none
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Berkshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SU 7720 7450
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Waingels College, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	11 ha	Height OD: (metres)	45m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Berks Arch	Project design originator:	David Fell
Project Manager:	Alastair Hancock	Director/Supervisor:	Jonathan R Hunn
Sponsor / funding body:	Wokingham District Council		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	June 2009	End date:	September 2009
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Reading Museum	none	
Paper:		Site records, documents, photographs, plans	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Investigation: Waingels College, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1179/RWC/2		
Author(s):	Jonathan R. Hunn		
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