

Weldale Street,  
Reading,  
Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation  
(Phase 1)  
Summary



*For*  
Ridge and Partners LLP

Site Code: WELD19

CA Project: AN0085

October 2019



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### ***Introduction***

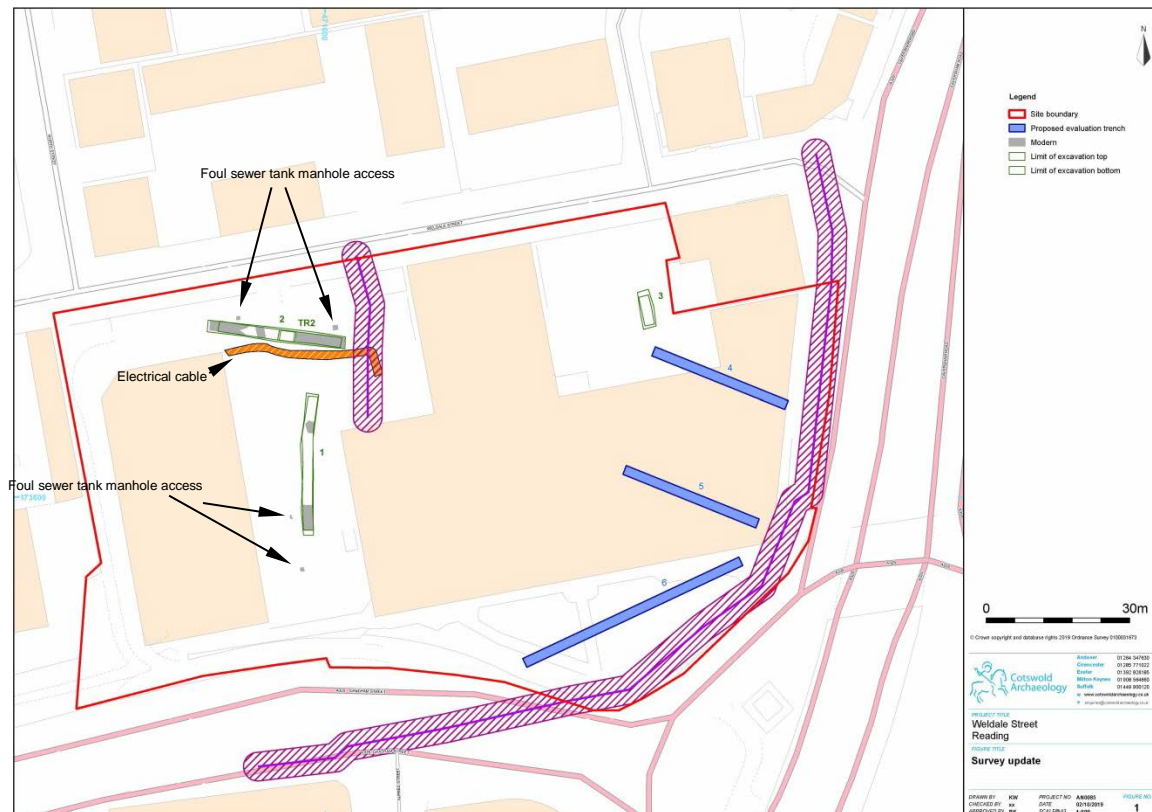
This document sets out a summary of the first phase archaeological evaluation undertaken between 24-30 September 2019 at Weldale Street, Reading, Berkshire centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 471020 173611 for Ridge and Partners LLP as a condition of planning permission granted by Reading Borough Council for the redevelopment of the site (ref 170326)

The proposed development area is approximately 1.4ha. It comprises of a mix of low rise and ground-level car parking at the western end of the site and light industrial buildings and yards within the centre and east extents. The land is broadly flat owing to prior terracing since the land would have previously gradually sloped down from south to north. The site lies at approximately 41m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), rising to the south east.

### ***Methodology***

The evaluation is to eventually comprise the excavation of 6 trenches, 5no. 30 x 2m trenches, and 1no. 50 x 2m trench. Phase 1 is an initial phase of trial trenching comprising three trenches (**Trench 1 – 3**); **Trench 3** particularly was constrained by, below ground structures and services, as were **Trenches 1 and 2**, resulting in a reduction in length for the former (Figure 1). **Trenches 1, 2 and 3** were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a breaker, and a toothless grading bucket. The position of each trench had to be modified due to the above issues. **Trenches 4-6** (Phase 2) will be excavated once the extant buildings have been demolished.

All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. All trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 Survey Manual. All deposits encountered at the site were recorded in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.



**Figure 1. Map showing excavated Trenches from 1 to 3 (Phase 1) and proposed location of trenches from 4 to 6 (Phase 2)**

## Results

This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendices A.

**Trenches 1, 2, and 3** contained no features of archaeological interest. Made ground averaged approximately 0.87m in depth, overlying the natural geology. The natural geology was best preserved in **Trench 2** (Figure 2) where light yellow coarse sand and gravel with seams of dark brown sandy clay (**2003** – Taplow Gravel Member) overlay chalk (**2004** – Seaford Chalk Formation). The sand and gravel measured 0.43m thick in **Trench 2**.

Of note was the presence of large (c. 3m diameter) foul sewer tanks submerged beneath the concrete to the north of **Trench 2** and to the west of **Trench 1** which present substantial truncation of the natural geology as well as a potential risk factor in groundworks. Significant modern truncation was found across the three trenches and it is likely that previous terracing has also reduced potential for archaeology.



Figure 2. Representative section of natural geology in Trench 2

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	1000	layer		Man Made Ground		30.00	2.00		
1	1001	layer		Natural		30.00	2.00		
2	2000	layer		Man Made Ground		30.70	2.00		
2	2001	layer		Natural		30.00	2.00		
2	2002	cut		Cut of modern post-hole		0.67	0.43		Modern coal
2	2003	fill	2002	Fill of modern post-hole		0.67	0.43		Modern coal
3	3000	layer		Man Made Ground		19.90	2.00		
3	3001	layer		Natural		19.90	2.00		

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