

**Thatcham Police Station**  
**Thatcham**  
**West Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

DRAFT

*for*  
**RPS Planning & Development**  
*on behalf of*  
**Thames Valley Police**


CA Project: 3420  
CA Report: 11101

May 2011

Thatcham Police Station  
Thatcham  
West Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 3420  
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date	10 May 2011
issue	02

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## SUMMARY

**Project Name:** Thatcham Police Station  
**Location:** Thatcham, West Berkshire  
**NGR:** SU 5187 6747  
**Type:** Evaluation  
**Date:** 11-12 April 2011  
**Location of Archive:** To be deposited with West Berkshire Museum  
**Accession Number:** NEBYM 2011.8  
**Site Code:** TPS 11

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in April 2011 at land at Thatcham Police Station, Thatcham, West Berkshire. A total of four trenches was excavated.

The evaluation identified a wall of 18th-century date in Trench 4. Floors and a fireplace which represented the remains of a structure dating to the 19th century were identified in Trench 3. No significant archaeological deposits or features were identified during the evaluation.

A sherd of residual medieval pottery was recovered from a modern tree bole in Trench 1.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In April 2011 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation at the request of RPS Planning and Development on behalf of Thames Valley Police at Thatcham Police Station, Thatcham, West Berkshire (centred at NGR: SU 5187 6747; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken at the request of Mr Duncan Coe, Archaeological Officer, West Berkshire Council (WBC) in advance of the submission of a planning application.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2011) and approved by Mr Duncan Coe. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006). It was monitored by Mr Duncan Coe, including a site visit on 11 April 2011.

### ***The site***

1.3 The proposed development area encloses an area of approximately 0.2ha, and comprises the Police Station and Police Houses together with associated gardens and areas of hardstanding. The site is bounded to the south by Chapel Street and on the remaining sides by residential properties and gardens (Fig. 2).

1.4 The site is flat and lies at c. 77m AOD. The underlying geology comprises Lambeth Group (Clay, Silt and Sand) of the Palaeocene era (BGS 2011). The natural substrate, a light yellow brown gravel, was observed in Trenches 1-4.

### ***Archaeological background***

1.5 Mesolithic activity is relatively common in the Lower Kennett Valley between Hungerford and Newbury (Lobb and Rose 1996) and there is evidence that this activity continues to the east towards Thatcham with a significant Mesolithic site identified at Thatcham Sewerage Works (Peake and Crawford 1922 and Wymer 1962).

- 1.6 Later prehistoric activity was identified at Dunstan Park to the north-east of the town and comprised isolated features of Middle Bronze Age date and an unenclosed Early Iron Age settlement (Barnes *et al* 1995).
- 1.7 A substantial Roman roadside settlement at Thatcham Newton extended at least 1.4km along *Ermin Street* the Roman road between Cirencester (*Corinium*) and Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*) (Margary 1973, 130, **41a**). This site is located to the west of the modern town. The remains of stone buildings were identified together with evidence for iron and bronze working (Harris 1937).
- 1.8 Thatcham, together with Reading and Aldermaston were developing as urban centres in the Late Saxon period (Astill 1978) and also had minster churches and were late Saxon royal manors (Lobb and Rose 1996). The conjectural location of the original Saxon settlement is recorded 220m south of the site (Fig. 2, **1**). Occupation of the town continued into the medieval period and the site is located within the eastern area of the medieval town (Fig. 2, **2**). The approximate location of the 12th-century market is recorded 150m to the south-west of the site (Fig. 2, **3**). The town achieved borough status in the 14th century (Astill 1978), although development of Thatcham was restricted by the growth of Newbury as a commercial centre from the 11th century onwards. The site of two almshouses are recorded within the medieval town 150m to the east of the site (Fig. 2, **4**) and 150m to the south (Fig. 2, **6**). Further medieval evidence has been recorded in the vicinity by previous archaeological works, including medieval pits and a stone lined well 150m south-west of the site (Fig. 2, **7**).
- 1.9 Post-medieval expansion of the town along Chapel Street is indicated by the surviving 16th and 17th century buildings alongside the road, many of which are Grade II Listed (see Fig. 2). Grade II Listed Buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site comprise the 16th-century cottage at 17 Chapel Street 20m south of the site, the 17th-century 42 Chapel Street 50m to the east of the site, and the early 18th-century 2 Chapel Street 50m to the west of the site. Post-medieval cruck trusses were recorded inside properties (prior to demolition) 100m east of the site (Fig. 2, **9**) and 150m south of the site (Fig. 2, **8**), and a late post-medieval tiled floor was recorded 130m west of the site (Fig. 2, **11**; TVAS 2009). Further evidence of post-medieval activity in the site vicinity include a pit filled with brick and bone fragments recorded 150m south-west of the site (Fig. 2, **10**).

1.10 In the site vicinity modern features and disturbance have been recorded by previous archaeological investigations 50m west (Fig. 2, **13**; TVAS 2005) and 230m south-west of the site (Fig. 2, **12**), while two further previous archaeological investigations recorded no significant archaeological deposits 30m to the west of the site (Fig. 2, **15**) and 100m to the west of the site (Fig. 2, **14**).

1.11 Further previous archaeological works in the site vicinity include two building surveys (Fig. 2, **16** and **17**) and two desk-based assessments (Fig. 2, **18** and **19**).

### **Archaeological objectives**

1.12 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date and extent of any archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site. This information will assist WBC in making an informed judgement on the significance of the archaeological resource, and the likely impact upon it of the proposed development.

### **Methodology**

1.13 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 4 trenches 1.3m in width and of varying lengths. Trench 1 was 12.8m in length, Trench 2 was 6.4m in length, Trench 3 was 3.15m in length and Trench 4 was 1.9m in length (Fig. 3). The locations and sizes of the trenches varied from those set out within the WSI due to the presence of buried services, overhead cables and mature trees. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual* (2009).

1.14 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. 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. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).

1.15 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003) and no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (2010).

- 1.16 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. The site archive will be deposited with West Berkshire Museum, none of the artefactual material will be retained. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 2. RESULTS (FIGS 3-5)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively. Details of the relative heights of each trench expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix A.
- 2.2 A similar stratigraphic sequence was identified in all of the trenches consisting of natural substrate, 106, 204, 313 and 404, comprising yellow brown gravel, observed between 0.58m and 1.15m below present ground level (bpgl) (deeper to the north), overlain by on average 0.1m of alluvium, 103, 203, 306 and 403, which was in turn covered by a series of make-up layers, 102, 101, 202, 201, 305, 301, 402 and 401. This was sealed by a topsoil layer, 100, 200, 300 and 400. Structural remains associated with brick-built structures were revealed in Trenches 3 and 4. A tree bole was identified in Trench 1.

### ***Trenches 1 and 2 (Fig 3)***

- 2.3 Although all trenches had a similar stratigraphic sequence the depths of deposits were greater in Trenches 1 and 2. In Trenches 1 and 2 the natural substrate was observed at 1.09m bpgl (76.31m AOD) and 1.04m bpgl (76.39m AOD) respectively, compared to 0.59m bpgl (76.11m AOD) in Trench 3 and 0.58m bpgl (76.13m AOD) in Trench 4. The ground level of the surrounding properties (Thatcham Methodist Church and 30 Chapel Street) appeared to be slightly lower than the northern part of the site. This is probably due to the greater thickness of deposits 102, 101, 202 and 201 which suggests that the ground level in the northern part of the site was raised during the construction of 24 and 25 Chapel Street (Police Houses). In the northern end of Trench 1 a tree bole was identified. The fill 104 contained a single sherd of abraded medieval pottery, post-medieval pottery and modern glass.



### **Trench 3 (Figs 3-4)**

- 2.4 Within Trench 3 a service trench, two brick surfaces, 302 and 304, and a brick fireplace 303 were identified. The natural substrate 313 was identified (in a slot 0.46m long and 0.25m wide) at a depth of 0.69m below present ground level (bpgl) and was overlain by alluvium 306 and make-up layer 305. The latter was cut by a north/south orientated service trench which was overlain by a brick-built structure including floors 302 and 304, fireplace 303 (containing bricks dating to the 20th century) and associated make-up layer 307. The brick floors and fireplace appeared to be broadly contemporary and consisted of random coursed red bricks (approximately 8½" x 4½" x 1¾") in stretcher brick bond. The bricks comprising floor 302 show little signs of abrasion whilst the bricks comprising floor 304 are slightly more abraded. However it is likely that these two floors were once part of the same floor surface butting fireplace 303. Three courses remain of fireplace 303 two of which are below the floor level. The brick floors and fireplace were truncated during the demolition of the cottages and the excavation of service trench 311.

### **Trench 4 (Figs 3 & 5)**

- 2.5 The natural substrate 404 was identified at 0.58m bpgl (in an area 1.7m long and 0.84m wide) and was overlain by alluvium 403 and make-up layer 402. These deposits were cut by east/west orientated wall 405 at the northern end of the trench. This wall comprised three courses formed from regular coursed bricks (measuring 8¾" x 4" x 2" and dating to the 18th century) with a mainly header brick bond, one stretcher brick was randomly placed within the top and bottom courses. To the west the wall was truncated by service trench 406.

### **The Finds**

- 2.6 Quantities of artefactual material were recovered from five deposits in addition to some samples brick retained from masonry structures. The finds comprise post-medieval and modern pottery, a single sherd of medieval pottery, clay tobacco pipe, ceramic building material, modern glass, iron nails together with a small quantity of animal bone. The assemblage dates to the 18th to 19th centuries (Appendix B) and none of the material will be retained.
- 2.7 A single bodysherd in a coarse quartz-tempered fabric probably 'Newbury C type' (Vince *et al* 1997, 52–53) of the medieval period was recovered from fill 104 of modern tree bole 103.

- 2.8 Pottery of post-medieval and modern date was recovered from deposit 104 (fill of tree bole 105) and layers 301 and 305. The assemblage consist of green and red glazed earthenware, refined whireware, English stoneware, glazed yellow ware and glazed cream are.
- 2.9 Ceramic building material was recovered from two deposits 104 and 305 and from two masonry structures 303 and 405. The assemblage spans the late 17th to 20th centuries and the classes identified are mainly bricks, some of which with quantity of lime mortar attached, and a floor tile from layer 305. A very late example, dateable to the 20th century, was recorded from structure 303 and exhibits the characteristic sharps edges of the bricks produced from a tin mould (approximately 8½" x 4½"x 1¾"). Three pieces of bricks were retrieved from structure 405 and are dateable to the 18th century plus according to the sizes (8¾" x 4" x 2") and the lime mortar attached.

### **3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 A wall of probable 18th-century was identified in Trench 4. In Trench 3 brick floors and a brick fireplace associated with the terraced cottages visible on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map, and demolished by the time of the 1967 Ordnance Survey map were identified. A modern tree bole in Trench 1 contained a residual sherd of medieval pottery attesting to the presence of medieval activity in the vicinity of the site.
- 3.2 No evidence of features or deposits associated with the variety of archaeological sites set out in the archaeological background (above) was identified during the evaluation. The presence of the alluvial deposit directly covering the natural substrate could suggest that these archaeological deposits and features did not exist within the site and have not been truncated during the construction and demolition of the terraced cottages previously located within the site.

### **4. CA PROJECT TEAM**

Fieldwork was undertaken by Sian Reynish, assisted by Jay Wood. The report was written by Sian Reynish, assisted by Jay Wood. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by Sian Reynish, and prepared for

deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Laurent Coleman.

## 5. REFERENCES

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*Proc. Prehist. Soc* 28, 329-61

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**APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

Trench 1 Present ground level north end: 77.46m AOD; south end: 77.34m AOD

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Topsoil: light to mid grey-brown sandy silt			0.28	
101	Layer	Make-up layer: dark greyish/blackish brown sandy silt			0.44	
102	Layer	Make-up layer: mid yellowish/greyish brown sandy silt			0.25	
103	Layer	Alluvium: mid-light yellowish brown sandy silt			0.12	
104	Fill	Fill of 105	1.3	0.74	0.42	C18
105	Cut	Cut of tree bole	1.3	0.74	0.42	
106	Layer	Natural substrate: mid-light yellowish brown gravel				

Trench 2 Present ground level west end: 77.48m AOD; east end: 77.38m AOD

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Layer	Topsoil: dark greyish-brown sandy silt			0.26	
201	Layer	Make-up layer: dark greyish/blackish brown sandy silt			0.29	
202	Layer	Make-up layer: mid yellowish/greyish brown sandy silt			0.35	C18-C19
203	Layer	Alluvium: mid-light yellowish brown sandy silt			0.14	
204	Layer	Natural substrate: mid-light yellowish brown gravel				

Trench 3 Present ground level west end: 76.69m AOD; east end: 76.71m AOD

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
300	Layer	Topsoil: dark greyish brown sandy silt			0.12	
301	Layer	Make-up layer: mid yellowish brown sandy silt			0.2	C18-C19
302	Masonry	Brick Floor	0.6	0.55	0.05	
303	Masonry	Possible Fireplace	1.3	0.7	0.2	C19-C20
304	Masonry	Brick Floor	1.3	0.5	0.05	
305	Layer	Make-up layer: dark yellowish/greyish brown sandy silt			0.14	C19
306	Layer	Alluvium: mid-light yellowish brown sandy silt			0.09	
307	Layer	Lime Mortar Bedding for 302	>2.13	>1.3	0.04	C18-C19
308	Layer	Possible Bedding Layer: Mid yellow brown clay	>1.3	>0.54	0.05	
309	Fill	Fill of 310: mid grey brown sandy silt	>1.3	>0.23	0.21	
310	Cut	Cut of drainage pipe trench	>1.3	>0.23	0.21	
311	Cut	Cut of service	>1.6	0.4		
312	Fill	Fill of 311: dark greyish brown sandy silt	>1.6	0.4		
313	Layer	Natural substrate: mid-light yellowish brown gravel				
314	Layer	Make-up layer: dark greyish brown sandy silt	>1.3	>0.23	0.15	

Trench 4 Present ground level north end: 76.73m AOD; south end: 76.68m AOD

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
400	Layer	Topsoil: dark greyish brown sandy silt			0.12	
401	Layer	Make-up layer: mid yellowish brown sandy silt			0.17	
402	Layer	Make-up layer: dark yellowish/greyish brown sandy silt.			0.19	
403	Layer	Alluvium: mid yellowish brown sandy silt.			0.1	
404	Layer	Natural substrate: mid-light yellowish brown gravel				
405	Masonry	Brick wall	>0.88	0.21	>0.2	C18+

## APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Description	Ct.	Wt.	Date
104	Ceramic building material	4	207	C18
	Medieval pottery: quartz-tempered fabric	1	3	
	Post-medieval pottery: green glazed earthenware	1	8	
	Animal bone: cow-size	1	21	
	Clay tobacco pipe: stem	1	4	
	Modern green glass	1	6	
202	Clay tobacco pipe: stem	2	8	C18-C19
301	Post-medieval/modern pottery: refined whiteware, glazed yellow ware	3	78	C19
	Clay tobacco pipe: stem	1	6	C18-C19
	Iron nail	1	6	
303	Ceramic building material: bricks	2	3778	C19-C20
305	Ceramic building material	1	364	C19
	Iron nail	1	57	
	Clay tobacco pipe: stem	2	6	
	Animal bone: sheep-size	7	7	
	Post-medieval /modern pottery: refined white ware, red glazed earthenware, glazed cream ware, English stoneware	6	35	
	Glass	2	10	
	Ceramic building material	4	155	
307	Clay tobacco pipe: stem	1	2	C18-C19
	Animal bone: sheep-size	1	4	
405	Ceramic building material: bricks with lime mortar	3	1928	C18+

## APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

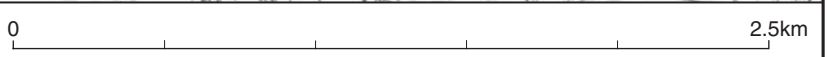
<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Thatcham Police Station, Thatcham, West Berkshire	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in April 2011 at land at Thatcham Police Station, Thatcham, West Berkshire. A total of four trenches was excavated.</p> <p>The evaluation identified a wall of 18th-century date in Trench 4. Floors and a fireplace which represented the remains of a structure dating to the 19th century were identified in Trench 3. No significant archaeological deposits or features were identified during the evaluation.</p> <p>A sherd of residual medieval pottery was recovered from a modern tree bole in Trench 1.</p>	
Project dates	11-12 April 2011	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Thatcham Police Station, Thatcham, West Berkshire	
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	0.2ha	
Site co-ordinates	SU 5187 6747	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	none	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Laurent Coleman	
Project Supervisor	Sian Reynish	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>		
	none	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>		
	none	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Not retained	Clay pipe, animal bone, glass and CBM
Paper	West Berkshire Museum NEBYM 2011.8	WSI, trench sheets, context sheets, wall recording sheets, section drawings and plan, trench plan and photographic registers
Digital	West Berkshire Museum NEBYM 2011.8	Digital plan, digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2011 <i>Thatcham Police Station, Thatcham, West: Archaeological Evaluation</i>. CA typescript report <b>11101</b></p>		




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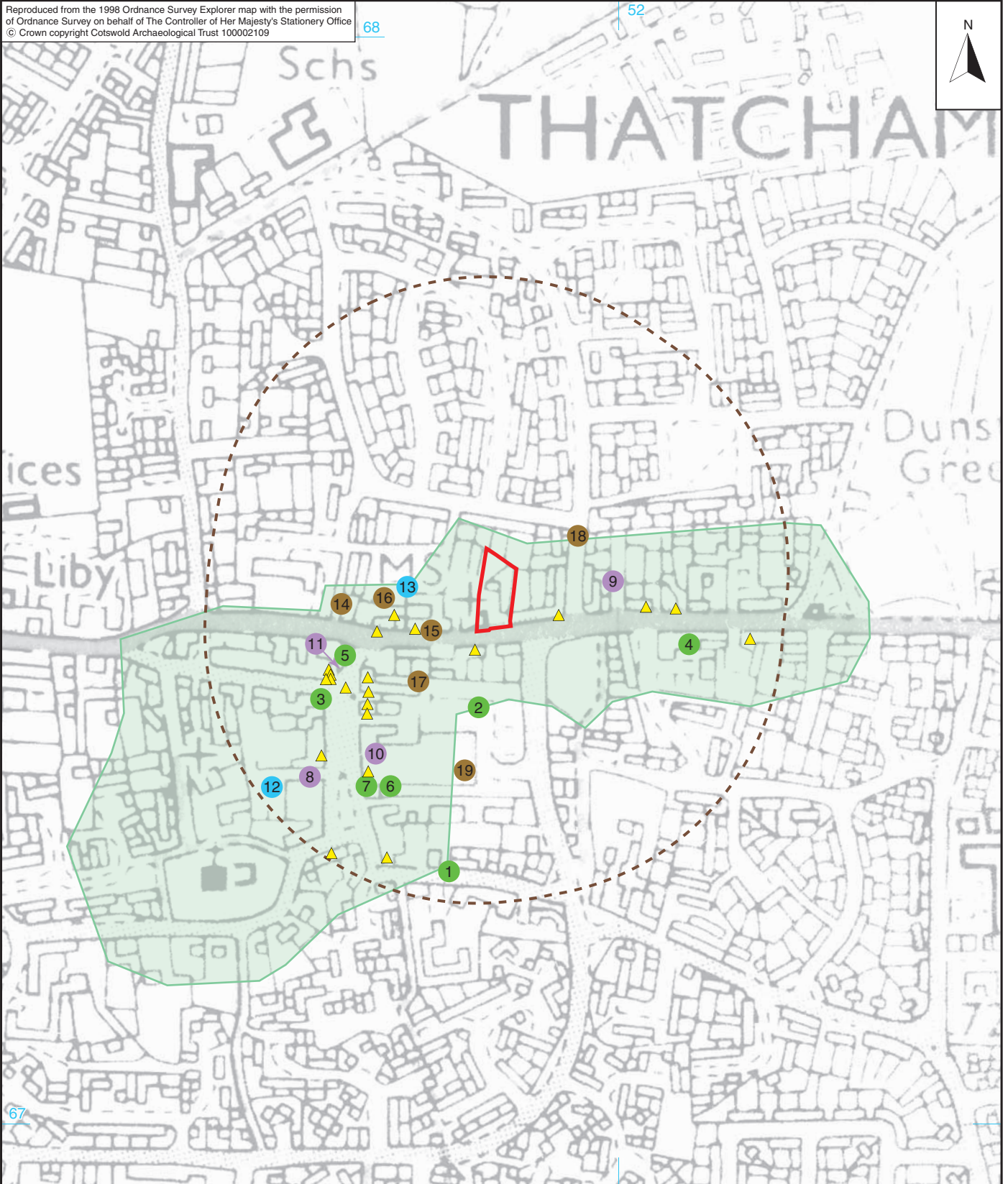


site



 <b>COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY</b>			
<b>PROJECT TITLE</b> Thatcham Police Station Thatcham, West Berkshire			
<b>FIGURE TITLE</b> <b>Site location plan</b>			
<b>DRAWN BY</b>	<b>SCALE</b>	<b>PROJECT NO.</b>	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
LG	1:25,000@A4	3420	<b>1</b>

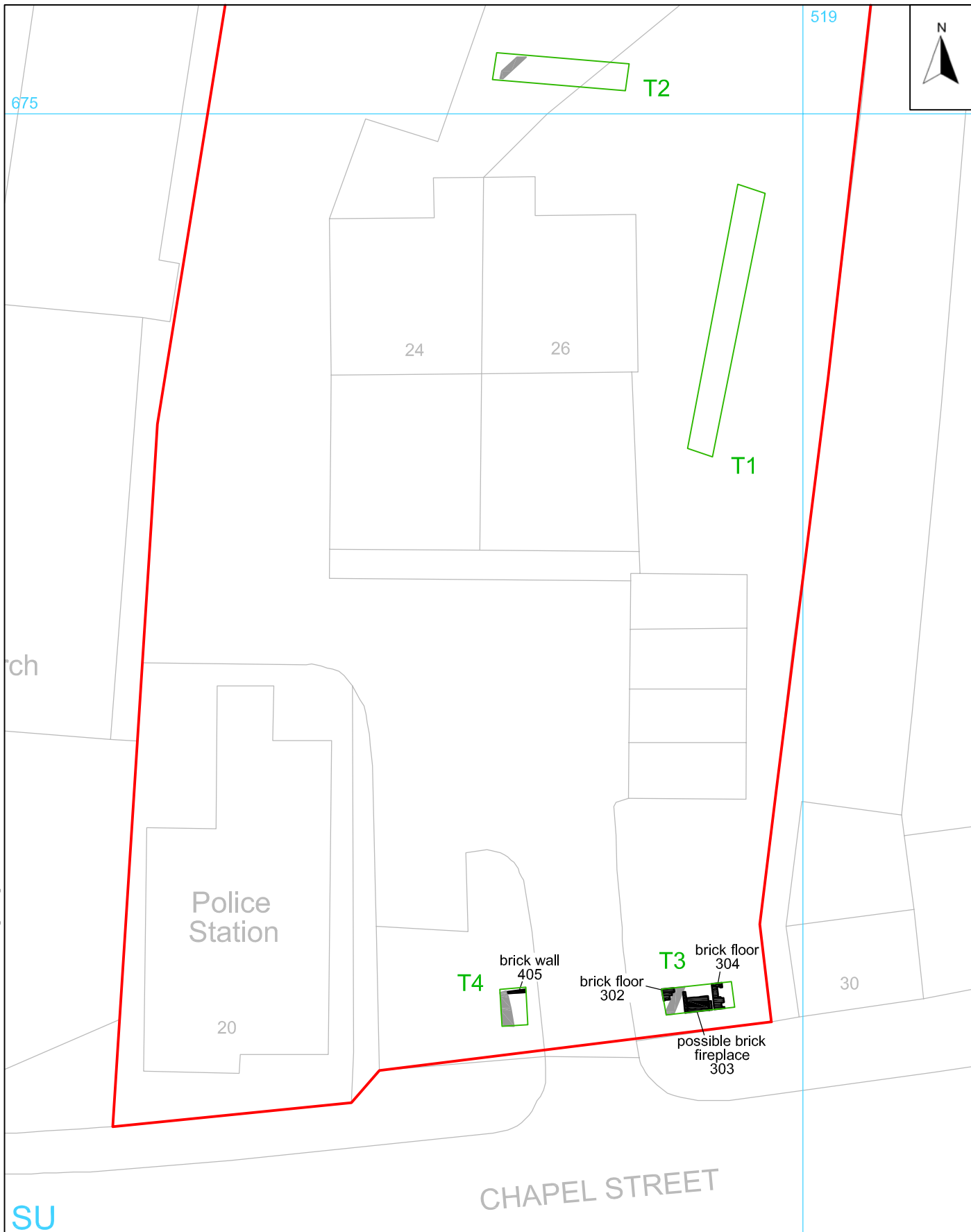




0 500m

SU

site	previous archaeological works	COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY	
study area	Grade II Listed building	PROJECT TITLE Thatcham Police Station Thatcham, West Berkshire	
medieval	approximate extent of medieval town	FIGURE TITLE <b>Recorded heritage assets</b>	
post-medieval		DRAWN BY LG	SCALE 1:5000@A4
modern		PROJECT NO. 3420	FIGURE NO. <b>2</b>



P:\3420 Thatcham Police Station Thatcham West Berks EVAL\Illustration\Drafts\3420 Thatcham Police Station Fig 2.dwg

SU

- site
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- modern intrusion

 **COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY**

PROJECT TITLE  
**Thatcham Police Station  
 Thatcham, West Berkshire**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench location plan, showing  
 archaeological features**

DRAWN BY	SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
LG	1:250@A4	3420	<b>3</b>

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4



5

<p>4 View of Trench 3, looking west (Scales 1m)</p> <p>5 View of Trench 4, looking north (Scales 1m)</p>	 <b>COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY</b>		
	<p><i>PROJECT TITLE</i></p> <p>Thatcham Police Station Thatcham, West Berkshire</p>		
	<p><i>FIGURE TITLE</i></p> <p><b>Photographs</b></p>		
	<p><i>DRAWN BY</i></p> <p>LG</p>	<p><i>SCALE</i></p> <p>n/a</p>	<p><i>PROJECT NO.</i></p> <p>3420</p>