

Shaw House Kitchen Garden Newbury West Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
West Berkshire Council

CA Project: 770485
CA Report: 16662

November 2016



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Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	17/11/16	Chris Ellis	Ray Kennedy	Internal review	General Edit	Richard Greatorex

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Shaw House Kitchen Garden, Newbury
Location:	Shaw House, Newbury, West Berkshire
NGR:	SU 47577 68359
Type:	Watching Brief
Date:	16 November 2016
Location of Archive:	West Berkshire Museum
Site Code:	SHKG 16

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the development of the kitchen garden area of the Tudor period Shaw House, Newbury, West Berkshire.

A north-west/south-east aligned linear cut feature was partially exposed in the south-western extent of the groundworks. A small assemblage of post-medieval bone and ceramic building material, as well as residua worked flint of Neolithic/Bronze Age date, was recorded from the fill of the possible ditch. It is possible the ditch was part of temporary Civil War defences during the Second Battle of Newbury in October 1644, which was centred on Shaw House.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In November 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for West Berkshire Council at Shaw House Kitchen Garden, Newbury, West Berkshire (centred on NGR: SU 47577 68359; Figure 1).
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken as West Berkshire Council seeks to create a Community Garden Space at Shaw House on the site of the Kitchen Garden. This will include the creation of a 'learning space' amphitheatre,
- 1.3 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016b) and approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) acting on the advice of Alex Godden, Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council (AOWBC), the archaeological advisor to the WBC. The work was also undertaken to adhere to the Shaw House Garden Archaeology Strategy 2013 (D. Coe 2011). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014). It was monitored by Alex Godden, including a site visit on 16 November 2016.

The site

- 1.4 The house is in the village of Shaw, now a northern suburb of Newbury. It is set in a walled garden and is surrounded by an earthwork on three sides, the remains of the formal 17th-century (or possibly 16th) gardens are within the compass of the walls. It is a relatively level site rising gently from 80 to 85m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) from south to north, and is c. 175m north of the River Lambourn (Figure 1).
- 1.5 The site is bounded by Love Lane to the north, to the south by a hedgerow on top of a c. 2m earthen bank, to the west by an extant, possibly 18th century Coach House building (CA 2016a, 19) and to the east by a modern car parking area and a 19th century brick-built 'bothy' structure. At the time of the watching brief the gym and swimming pool structures had been demolished and the site comprised an area of rough grassland.
- 1.6 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Seaford Chalk Formation Chalk with no superficial deposits recorded.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Grade I Listed Shaw House is an Elizabethan Great House, dating to AD 1581. It has undergone major changes and the interior is largely 17th and 18th century. Set within a Grade II Registered Park, the house was used as a school from the Second World War until 1985, and is now owned and managed by West Berkshire Council. (CA 2016a)
- 2.2 The site was previously a kitchen garden and the location of both a gym (in the west of the site) and a swimming pool (in the east of the site) built by the neighbouring Trinity School. The Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council (AOWBC) Alex Godden has stated that there is some potential for buried archaeological features, in particular earlier garden features or maybe Civil War evidence (Godden 2016, *per comm.*). Thomas Dolman, son of Parliamentarian and Shaw House owner Humphrey Dolman, was a staunch supporter of Charles I in the Civil War and in October 1644 Shaw House served as the King's Headquarters.
- 2.3 Throughout the Civil War, Newbury's location on the route from London to the West Country made it strategically important. Donnington Castle, a mile to the north-west of Shaw remained a Royalist stronghold. By October 1644 Royalist fortunes in the area had waned and Charles I returned from the West Country to relieve the besieged garrison at Donnington castle. Shaw House had become an integral part of the Royalist defensive position in what became known as the "Second Battle of Newbury". By 26th October 1644 a large Parliamentarian army was gathered at Thatcham to the east of Shaw. The Royalist forces were greatly outnumbered but they had the advantage of a strong defensive position. The river and marshy ground to the south of Shaw together with the raised terraces around the garden made Shaw House the ideal place for the King to have his headquarters for the ensuing battle.
- 2.4 In the middle of the afternoon of Sunday 27th October the attack from the west of Shaw began. The strong positions of the Royalist infantry behind the raised garden terraces enabled them to fire in safety on the approaching psalm-singing Roundheads. The fighting was fierce with many casualties on both sides and fighting reached the immediate vicinity of the house; the walls still bear the marks of musket shot. Skeletons found in the grounds (both human and equine) suggest that some casualties were buried where they fell or were blown to pieces by cannon shot.

- 2.5 The raised terraces that surround the garden at Shaw House were a significant factor in the Royalists being able to hold their position and the Parliamentary forces abandoning the day. Despite the Royalists successful defence of Shaw their position was unsustainable and under cover of darkness they retreated; the King to Bath and his commanders with their soldiers and guns to the relative safety of Donnington Castle.
- 2.6 In the *Shaw House, Shaw-Cum-Donnington, Newbury: Garden Archaeological Strategy* (Coe 2011 [2014]) it states for 'Possible programme of archaeological excavation' (Ex.8), "If the gym and swimming pool are removed excavations in the kitchen garden should reveal the precise line of the old road through the east garden, the line of the earlier east boundary wall and possibly the sites of frames and possible features such as a pineapple pit in the north part of the kitchen garden. There could be gate piers on the line up to the water tower".

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
 - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2016b) and tried to fulfil the research question (Ex.8) for this part of the Shaw House gardens, stated in the *Archaeological Strategy* document (Coe 2011). Unfortunately the groundworks did not extend sufficiently to the east of the site to be able to address this archaeological research question. An archaeologist was present during all the intrusive groundworks (Figure. 2).

- 4.2 In discussion with the groundworkers' supervisor and A. Godden (AOWBC) it was confirmed that the 'revised' scope of the groundworks associated with the kitchen garden development, aside from the 'amphitheatre' feature, would be a superficial (<0.1m depth) reduction of the higher, swimming pool area of the site. A. Godden confirmed on site that no further archaeological observations were required in this part of the site. This was because of the minimally intrusive nature of the proposed groundworks in this area, in conjunction with the known depth of modern disturbance from the swimming pool structure's construction, recorded in recent machine-excavated geotechnical pits in this part of the site.
- 4.3 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Andover. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with West Berkshire Museum along with the site archive. 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.

5. RESULTS (FIGURES 2-3)

- 5.1 The only groundworks undertaken (**Trench 1**) was the machine excavation of a c. 8m diameter, stepped, circular earthwork, 'amphitheatre' feature in the west of the site (Figure 2). This feature was initially planned to be located at the eastern end of the site. This would have been in the area of the earlier swimming pool (now demolished). Earlier geotechnical pits had shown the swimming pool remains were at least 1m deep (below modern ground level) and lined with concrete (A. Godden *pers. comm.*). However, between the area of the gym and swimming pool areas of the site, a c.1.5m high, north/south aligned 'terrace' was visible. This would suggest the swimming pool area of the site had been built-up prior to the swimming pool construction.
- 5.2 The natural chalk geology was recorded at 0.65m depth below the modern ground surface. The topsoil was characterised by a very dark grey/black sandy silty clay with very common flint nodules (<0.12m) as well as brick/tile fragments, glass, coal, clinker and charcoal. The degree of brick/tile fragments and flint nodules would suggest this topsoil has been significantly disturbed by the demolition of the gym and swimming pool structures.

- 5.3 The only feature of note was north-west/south-east aligned, linear cut **102**, a possible ditch, which was only visible in the south-western part of **Trench 1** (Figures 2-3). The feature was at least 4m wide, 0.66m deep and only the north-easternmost edge of the feature was exposed in the trench. The feature deepened towards the south-west, and a very small area was visible in plan in the south-west part of the trench base. The single fill **101** of ditch **102**, was a light yellowish-brown clayey silt with very common chalk inclusions (<30mm) and rare, sub-angular/angular flint, rare ceramic building material (cbm) fragments (<30mm) and charcoal flecks throughout. A small assemblage of late medieval/post medieval CBM, and animal bone, as well as a residual Bronze Age worked flint core was found *in-situ*.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 Artefactual material from watching brief was hand-recovered from one ditch fill. The recovered material dates to the prehistoric and post-medieval periods. Quantities of the artefact types recorded are given in Appendix B.

Lithics

- 6.2 A piece of flint (87g) from fill **101** of ditch **102** may represent a core. Surfaces have recorticated (a surface discoloration resulting from burial environment [Sheperd 1972, 109]), however, a small number of flake scars have removed the recortication. The flint was residual and in a rolled (abraded) and edge-damaged condition. It cannot be asserted with certainty that the removals are genuine evidence of flint knapping: if they are the unsystematic nature of the reduction would be most suggestive of Bronze Age dating.

Ceramic building material

- 6.3 Fill **101** of ditch **102** also produced six fragments of late medieval/post-medieval ceramic building material (172g). Those which were sufficiently complete to allow further classification represented peg tile and flat roof tile.



7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Animal Bone

- 7.1 A single fragment of animal bone (113g) was recovered from deposit **101**, the fill of post-medieval ditch **102**. The bone was well preserved making possible its identification as a partial femur of cow (*Bos taurus*). This species has been exploited as a domestic animal since the Neolithic and as such its presence on site is to be expected (Baker and Worley, 2014). However, due to the low recovery it is not possible to make any useful inference beyond species identification.

8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The only area of intrusive groundworks was the machine-excavation of a c. 8m diameter, stepped circular 'amphitheatre' earthwork feature in the west end of the site. The 0.65m depth of soil profile above the natural chalk geology in this part of the site would suggest that this area has not been heavily truncated by modern developments associated with the recently demolished gym building that was located here.
- 8.2 The north-easternmost edge of a north-west/south-east aligned linear, a possible ditch, was recorded in the south-western part of the excavation, at 0.4m depth, directly below modern topsoil. The ditch cut the natural chalk geology and contained a small assemblage of late medieval / post-medieval brick and tile fragments, animal bone, and a single, residual worked flint core of Bronze Age date.
- 8.3 The Shaw House building and surrounding gardens, garden terraces and ancillary estate structures, most with at least a 16th century Tudor origin, are all closely aligned on a near-north/south and east/west alignment. The ditch recorded in the present watching brief, is on a markedly differing alignment, and contained a small assemblage of late medieval/post-medieval material. These aspects, in conjunction with the greater than 4m width of the ditch, might suggest that it is associated with the Second Battle of Newbury of October 1644.

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Ellis. The report was written by Chris Ellis. The finds and environmental reports were written by Jacky Sommerville and Andy Clarke

respectively. The illustrations were prepared by Rosanna Price. The archive has been compiled by Chris Ellis, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ray Kennedy.



10. REFERENCES

- Baker, P. and Worley, F. 2014, *Animal bones and archaeology: Guidelines for best practice* Swindon, English Heritage.
- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer* Accessed 15 November 2016
- CA 2016a, *Shaw House Garden Walls, Newbury, West Berkshire. Historic Building Recording*, CA typescript Report: **16424**
- CA 2016b, *Shaw House Kitchen Garden, Newbury, West Berkshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief.*
- Coe, D, 2011 *Shaw House, Shaw-Cum-Donnington, Newbury: Garden Archaeological Strategy*. – reformatted by Sarah Orr, 2014.
- Shepherd, W. 1972, *Flint: Its Origin, Properties & Uses*. London. Faber and Faber.



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

NB: Archaeological deposits and features in **BOLD**

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Very dark grey/black sandy silty clay with very common unworked flint nodules (<0.12m). Also common brick/tile fragments, glass, coal, clinker, charcoal.	-	-	0.4	
1	101	Fill	102	Ditch fill	Light yellowish-brown clayey silt with very common chalk inclusions (<30mm) and rare, sub-angular/angular flint, rare cbm fragments (<30mm) and charcoal flecks throughout.	>8.0	>4.0	>0.66	
1	102	Cut		Ditch	NW/SE aligned feature in SW of Tr.1. Only NE extent of feature visible. Moderate, concave side to feature. Cuts 103.	>8.0	>4.0	>0.66	
1	103	Layer		Natural geology	Natural chalk. Relatively weathered chalk, breaks into lumps (<50mm). Some patches of very pale slightly clayey silt and some patches <1m) of dark orange/brown, fine, sandy silty clay (solution hollows).	>8.0	>8.0	-	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Category	Description	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
101	Worked flint	Core	1	87	Post-medieval
	Post-medieval ceramic building material	Flat roof tile, peg tile, fragment	6	172	

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Shaw House Kitchen Garden, Newbury, West Berkshire: Archaeological Watching Brief	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the development of the kitchen garden area of the Tudor period Shaw House, Newbury, West Berkshire.</p> <p>A north-west/south-east aligned linear cut feature was partially exposed in the south-western extent of the groundworks. A small assemblage of post-medieval bone and ceramic building material, as well as residual worked flint of Bronze Age date, was recorded from the fill of the possible ditch. It is possible the ditch was part of temporary Civil War defences during the Second Battle of Newbury in October 1644, which was centred on Shaw House.</p>	
Project dates	16 November 2016	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	Historic Building Survey (CA 2016)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Newbury, West Berkshire	
Study area (M ² /ha)		
Site co-ordinates	SU 4757 6835	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	None	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ray Kennedy	
Project Supervisor	Chris Ellis	
MONUMENT TYPE	Military defences	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.) West Berkshire Museum	Content
Physical		Ceramic building material, animal bone, worked flint
Paper		Trench record, Context Records, Drawing Register, Photographic Register, A4 drawings
Digital		Digital photos, CAD Drawings
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Shaw House Kitchen Garden, Newbury, West Berkshire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 16662		



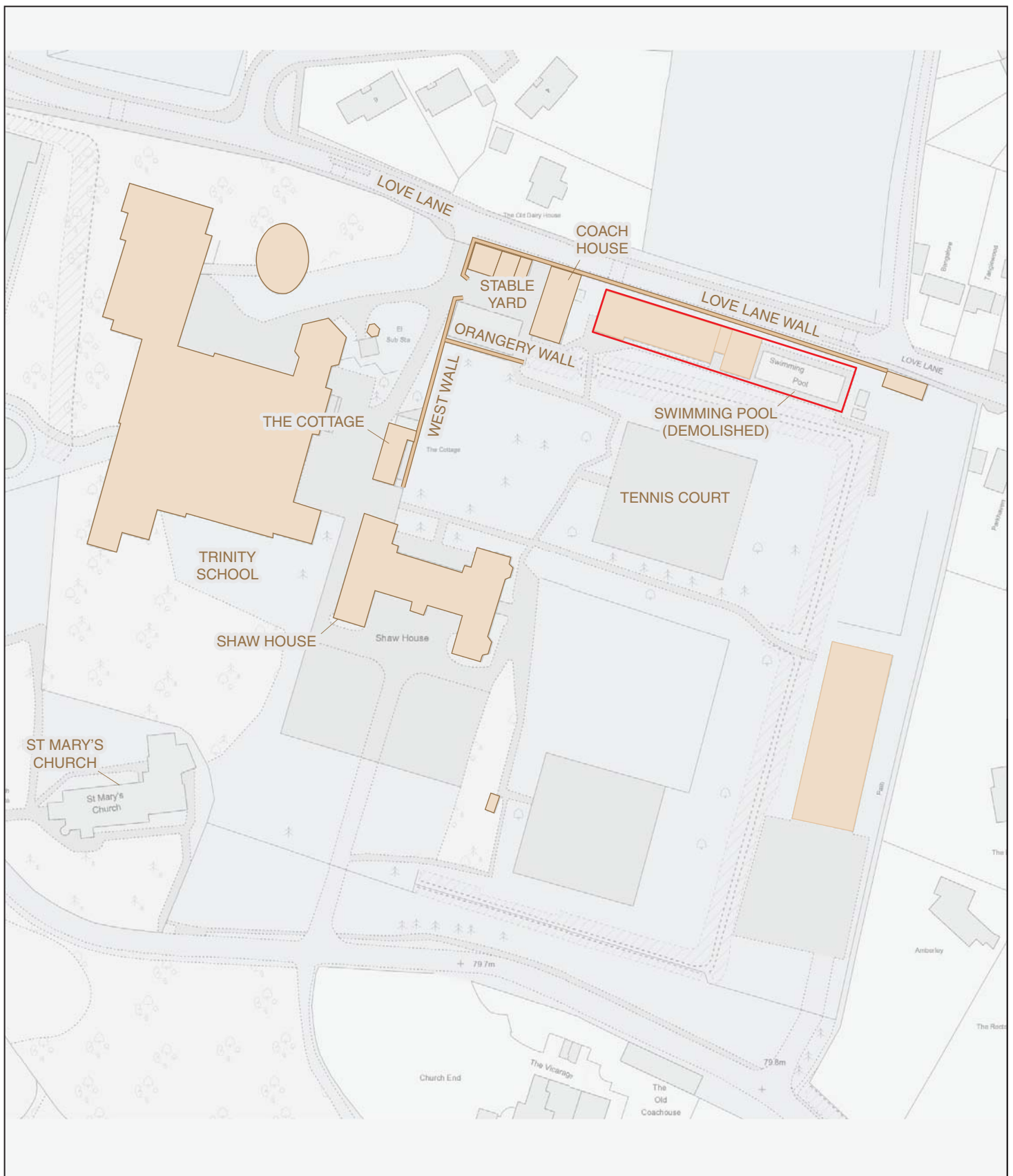
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PROJECT TITLE
 Shaw House Kitchen Garden, Newbury,
 West Berkshire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	770485	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	23.11.16	1
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE	1:25,000	

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- Site boundary/Trench 1 (see Fig. 3)
- Existing building within site boundary
- Demolished building within site boundary



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PROJECT TITLE

Shaw House Kitchen Garden, Newbury,
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FIGURE TITLE

Site location with Trench 1 location

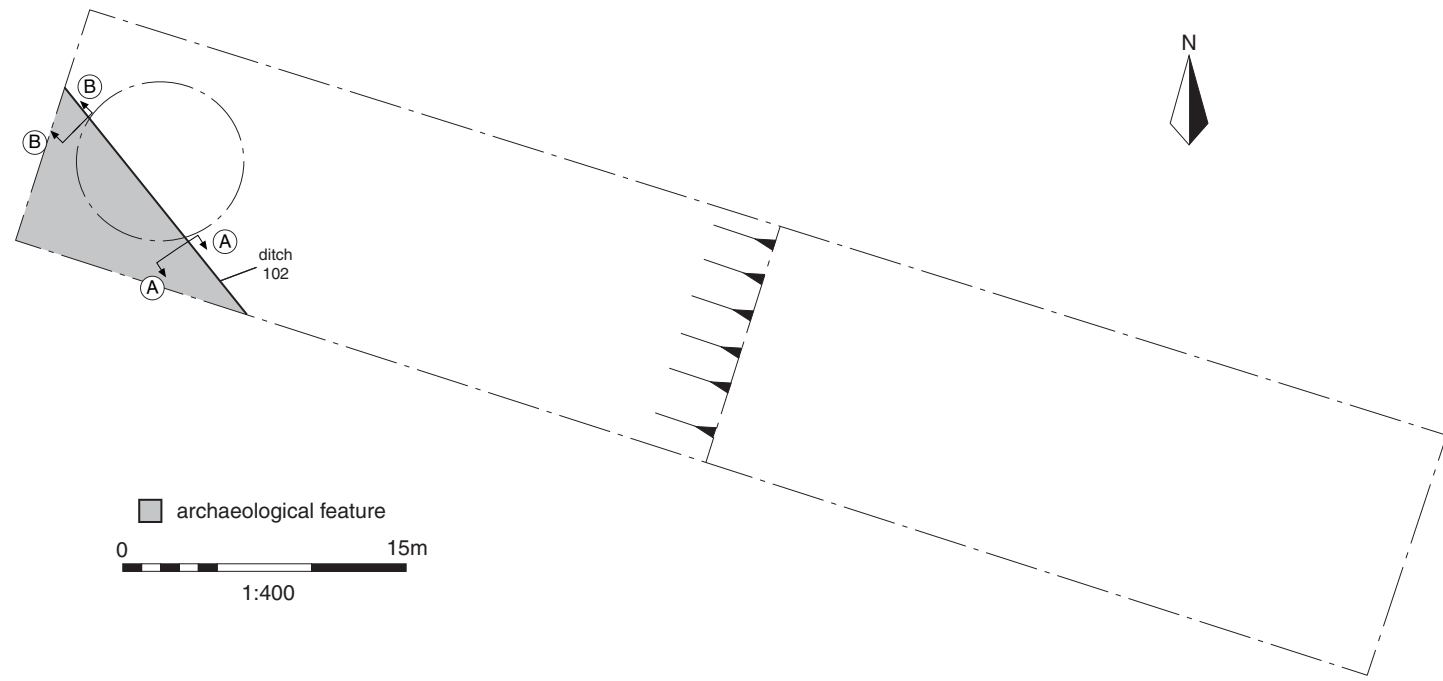
DRAWN BY RP PROJECT NO. 770485
 CHECKED BY DJB DATE 23.11.16
 APPROVED BY RK SCALE@A4 1:1500

FIGURE NO.

2

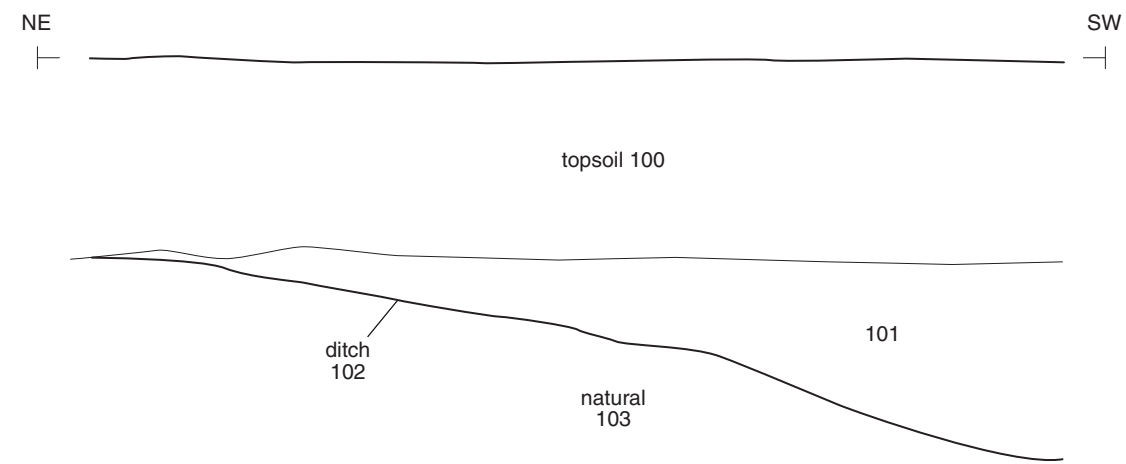


Trench 1



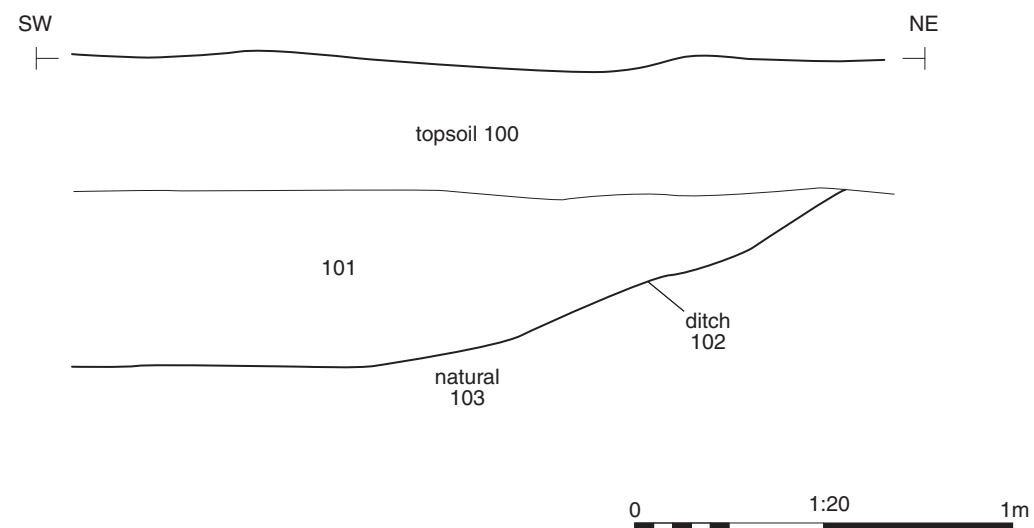
General view of ditch 102, looking south-east (1m scales)

Section AA



North-west facing section of ditch 102 (0.5m and 1m scales)

Section BB



South-east facing section of ditch 102 (1m scale)

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PROJECT TITLE
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FIGURE TITLE
**Trench 1: plan, sections and
 photographs**

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	770485	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	26.11.16	3
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE@A3	1:20 & 1:400	

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