

Proposed development on land at Acrefield, Charvil Lane, Sonning, Wokingham, Berkshire: Results of an archaeological evaluation

NGSU 7617 7556

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On behalf of:
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archaeology

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON LAND AT ACREFIELD, CHARVIL LANE, SONNING, WOKINGHAM, BERKSHIRE: RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Centred on NGR: SU 7617 7556

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation, consisting of the machine-excavation of two trenches on land at Acrefield, Charvil Lane, Sonning, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU76177556) was carried out by AC archaeology Ltd in February 2019. The work was undertaken in support of a planning application for the erection of two dwellings and associated infrastructure. Both trenches revealed a similar depositional sequence consisting of topsoil or modern surface make-up overlying naturally derived subsoil possibly representing an alluvial deposit above natural River Terrace Deposits. With the exception of a small assemblage of artefacts recovered from the surface of the subsoil horizon, two flint flakes and a sherd of medieval pottery, no evidence for deposits of archaeological significance was present in either of the trenches.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological evaluation on land at Acrefield, Charvil Lane, Sonning, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU 76177556). The work was undertaken by AC archaeology on behalf of Havisham Homes, the site owners.
- 1.2 The archaeological evaluation has been requested by Wokingham Borough Council, in accordance with condition 17 of planning consent ref. 183160. This investigation comprises the first stage of a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken as part of an overarching mitigation strategy agreed in advance with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to Wokingham Borough Council, and was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by AC archaeology (Robinson 2019).
- 1.3 The application area comprises approximately 0.5 hectares of land on the north side of Charvil Lane, Sonning, centred on NGR SU 7617 7556. It is currently occupied by a dwelling and associated garden and lies at around 50mOD. The underlying geology comprises River Terrace Deposits overlying solid geology of the Lambeth Group – clay, silt and sand formed in the Palaeogene Period.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 No heritage assets have been recorded within the application area, although Prehistoric, Romano-British, early medieval and medieval activity has been recorded within 1km from the application area, the nearest activity comprising a small number of pits of medieval date located c 250 – 300m southwest of the proposed development area.

- 2.2** An archaeological trench evaluation undertaken in 2013, adjacent to the proposed application area to the southwest, identified limited archaeological activity represented by a single linear feature of uncertain date. (Allen Archaeology 2013).

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1** The investigations were undertaken:

- to ascertain the presence/absence, function, date and chronology of any archaeological deposits present on the site;
- to enable a description of the significance of any heritage assets present;
- to enable an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on any heritage asset, and;
- to enable a mitigation strategy to be produced.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The investigations were undertaken in accordance with a WSI prepared by AC archaeology Ltd (Robinson 2019) and approved by the Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to Wokingham Borough Council.
- 4.2** All spoil removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Topsoil and overburden were removed by mechanical excavator, using a wide toothless bucket, and ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.
- 4.3** Each trench was recorded using the full range of the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system.
- 4.4** Trench 1 was located as per the WSI, but the presence of the existing building prevented Trench 2 being excavated in the intended position and was re-positioned as shown on Fig. 1.
- 4.5** The archive has been prepared using the site code ACW1179.

5. RESULTS

Trench 1 (see Fig. 1 and Plate 1)

- 5.1** This trench was situated in the west side of the site and within the footprint of one of the proposed dwellings (Plot 1). It measured 15m in length and 1.6m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. A sequence of soils including a much disturbed topsoil horizon (100) was present. No cut archaeological features were revealed within the trench. Two pieces of struck flint and a single, small, abraded sherd of medieval pottery were recovered. The subsoil deposit may represent an ancient alluvium associated with the nearby River Thames. The recorded layers are summarised in Table 1.

| Context | Depth b.g.s. | Description | Interpretation |
|---------|--------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 100 | 0 – 200mm | Dark grey-brown silty loam | Topsoil - modern. |
| 101 | 200 – 450mm | Light brown silty sand containing occasional small gravels. | Subsoil horizon. Alluvial in nature ? |
| 102 | 450mm+ | Yellow / yellow brown sandy clay / gravels. | Natural River Terrace Deposits. |

Table 1: Trench depositional sequence



Plate 1: View of Trench 1 from the southeast

Trench 2 (see Fig 1 and Plate 2)

- 5.2** This trench was situated in the south side of the existing building, adjacent to the footprint of Plot 2. It measured 15m in length and 1.6m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m. A sequence of deposits including modern surface make-up for a former pathway was present (200). No archaeological cut features were revealed within the trench. The

subsoil deposit may represent ancient alluvium associated with the nearby River Thames. The recorded layers are summarised in Table 2.

| Context | Depth b.g.s. | Description | Interpretation |
|---------|--------------|---|--|
| 200 | 0 – 250mm | Asphalt surface | Former pathway associated with extant adjacent house - modern. |
| 201 | 250 – 550mm | Light brown silty sand containing occasional small gravels. | Subsoil horizon. Alluvial in nature ? |
| 202 | 550mm+ | Yellow / yellow brown sandy clay / gravels. | Natural River Terrace Deposits. |

Table 2: Trench depositional sequence



Plate 2: View of trench 2 from the southeast

6. FINDS by Dan Carter

Pottery

- 6.1** A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from context 101. This undiagnostic body sherd weighed two grams and exhibited significant signs of abrasion. The fabric is consistent

with Fabric 41 identified at Newbury, Berkshire (Vince et al. 1997). At Newbury, sherds in this fabric were found in association with artefactual material datable to the 12th century.

Worked Flint

- 6.2** Two waste flakes were also recovered from context 101. These are likely of Bronze Age date and collectively weigh 13g. Both are likely to be waste flakes exhibiting remnants of cortex, with the smaller example displaying a sharp edge on one side.

7. COMMENT

- 7.1** The investigations produced no evidence for any archaeological activity in either of the trenches. The underlying deposit sequence encountered was consistent in both trenches, although slightly varying in depth. Displaced artefacts of prehistoric and medieval date were recovered from the subsoil horizon (context 101), which may be derived from an ancient alluvial deposit associated with the River Thames. Due to the absence of any cut features or archaeological deposits in either of the trenches and the paucity of finds, it is considered that the site does not have archaeological interest and that the development will have no impacts on archaeological deposits of any significance.

- 7.2** It is proposed that the artefacts are returned to the landowner or discarded.

8. REFERENCES

Allen Archaeology Limited. *'Trial Trenching on Land at August Field, Charvil Lane, Sonning on Thames, Berkshire'*; Report No 2013104 August 2013

British Geological Survey online
www.bgs.ac.uk/open_geoscience

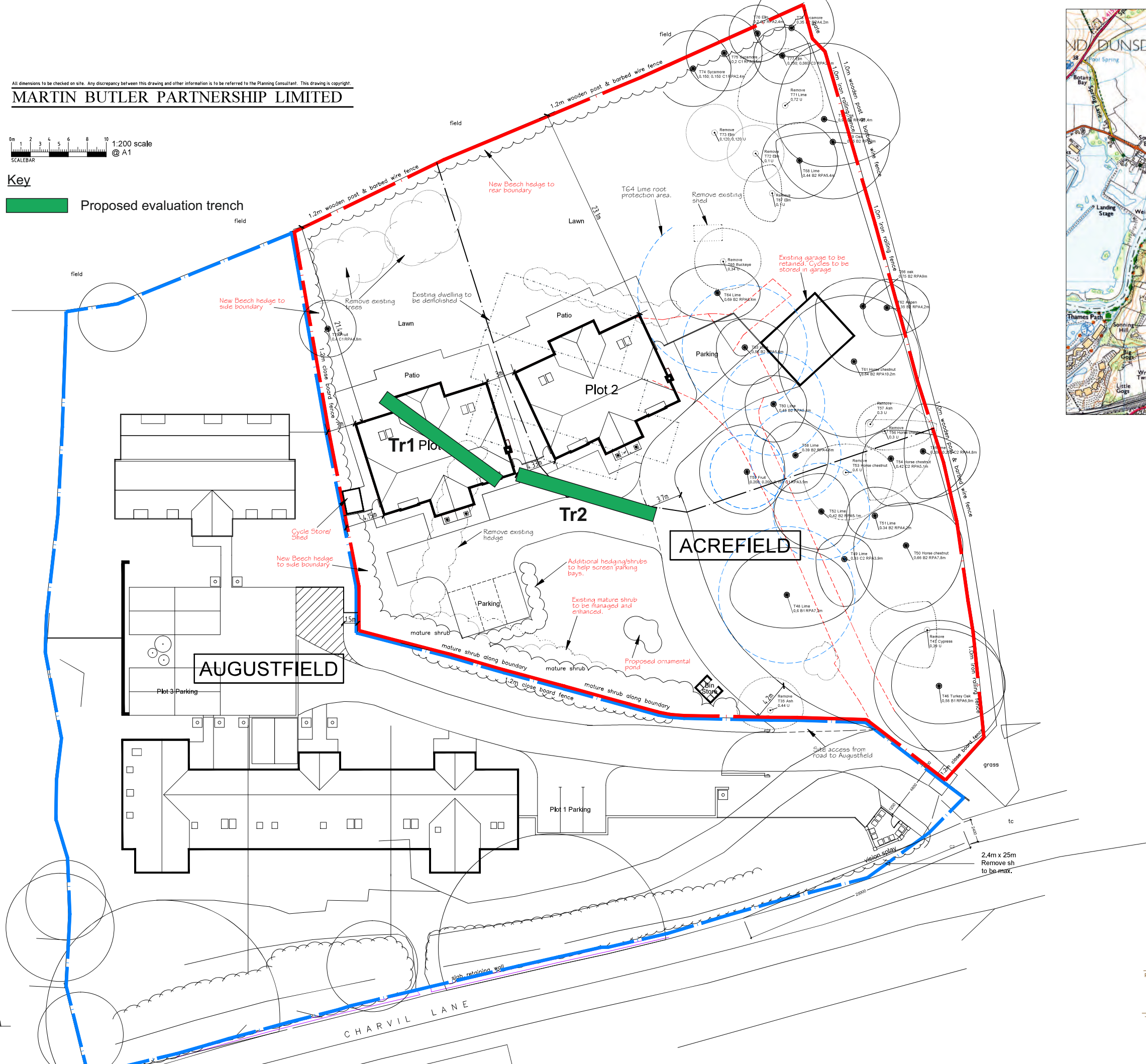
Robinson, S., *'Proposed development on land at Acrefield, Charvil Lane Sonning, Wokingham, Berkshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation'*, Unpublished client report Ref 1179/1/0 February 2019

Vince, A., Lobb, S.J., Richards, J.C., and Mephram, L., 1997. Excavations in Newbury, Berkshire 1979-1990. *Wessex Archaeology Report No.13*: Salisbury.

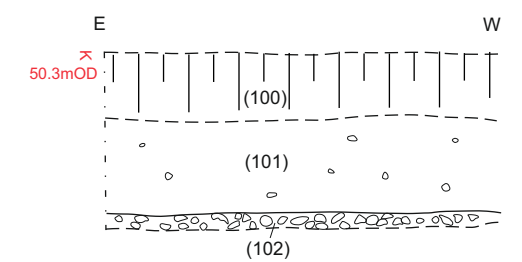
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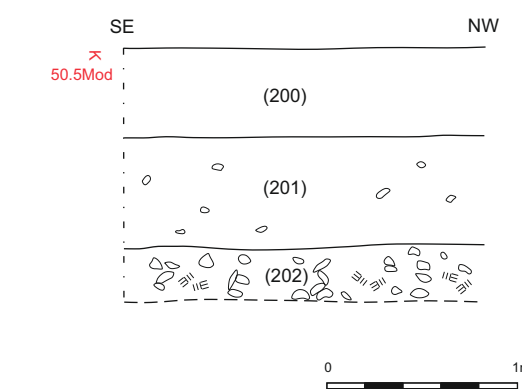
Proposed evaluation trench



a) Representative section of Trench 1, view from the north



b) Representative section of Trench 2, view from the north-east



PROJECT

Acreford, Sonning

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location, trench layout and representative sections

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