

Land Adjacent to 4 Wychelm Road, Shinfield, Wokingham, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief



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For

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By



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Contents

Non-technical summary.....	ii
1. Introduction	1
2. Site Location, Topography and Geology.....	1
3. Archaeological Background	1
4. Methodology.....	2
5. Results and Conclusion	5
6. Archive	5
7. COAS Acknowledgements	5
8. Bibliography	5

Illustrations

Figure 1: Site setting	3
Figure 2: Detailed site setting	4

Non-Technical Summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on land adjacent to 4 Wychelm Road, Shinfield, Wokingham, Berkshire (centred on NGR SU 73375 68155) over 3 days between the 14th and the 16th of July 2010. The work was commissioned and funded by Mr Stuart Price.

The watching brief was requested by the Local Planning Authority (Wokingham Borough Council) on the advice of Ms Mary O'Donoghue (Archaeology Officer, Berkshire Archaeology) as a condition of granting planning permission for the erection of a new dwelling. The request for the investigation was based on the proximity of the site to a number of various known archaeological sites/features listed in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

No archaeological features/deposits were observed and no archaeological artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on land adjacent to 4 Wychelm Road, Shinfield, Wokingham, Berkshire (centred on NGR SU 73375 68155) (hereafter referred to as the Site) over 3 days between the 14th and the 16th of July 2010. The investigation was commissioned and funded by Mr Stuart Price.
- 1.2 The Watching Brief was requested by the Local Planning Authority (Wokingham Borough Council) on the advice of Ms Mary O'Donoghue (Archaeology Officer, Berkshire Archaeology as a condition of granting planning permission for the erection of a new dwelling (planning reference: F/2007/1648). The request for the investigation was based on the proximity of the site to a number of known archaeological sites/features listed in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 1.3 The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1), General Policy and Principles, 1997*, and *Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5)*, issued by the DoE in 2010. The recommendation also conforms to County Structure and Local Plans.
- 1.4 This report summarises the topographical, geological, archaeological setting of the site, and presents the results of the Watching Brief.

2. Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR SU 73375 68155) is situated relatively close to the historic core of Shinfield, just off the A327 (Hollow Lane), c.1km from the M4 and the outskirts of Reading in the county of Berkshire. According to the British Geological Survey (2010), the underlying geology consists of London Clay Formation comprising clay, silt and sand and the soils are characterised by slightly acid and base-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), 2010).

3. Archaeological Background

- 3.1 The archaeological background for the Site has been reviewed from the records of archaeological sites and features listed in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) within a 250m radius search area of the Site. The request for the archaeological investigation was made due to the proximity of the Site to other sites of previous developments where archaeological remains were recorded and the most relevant of these are mentioned below.
- 3.2 In 2002 an archaeological excavation was carried out ahead of redevelopment for new housing by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS) (EWK146) just c. 170m west of the Site. The investigation uncovered several phases of activity comprising Middle Iron Age pits, Roman ditches and an undated cremation burial. Other prominent features within the local landscape are a series of cropmarks situated c. 250m east of the Site (Monument 01090.05.000). An evaluation carried out by Oxford Archaeology (EWK96) in 1999 investigated many of these and discovered that dating was unfortunately limited but some cropmarks were possibly Roman and others medieval or post-medieval.
- 3.3 Another evaluation carried out by TVAS in 2002 (EWK134) just 150m south-west of the Site also revealed some equivocal features that suggest evidence of further prehistoric activity in the area.

Within the environs of the Site prehistoric activity was also revealed during parts of the Lodden Valley (Berkshire) Fieldwalking Survey that was carried out in 1990-1991: Prehistoric flint flakes from the topsoil were recovered 90m south-west and 230m south-west of the Site.

4. Methodology

Construction Methodology

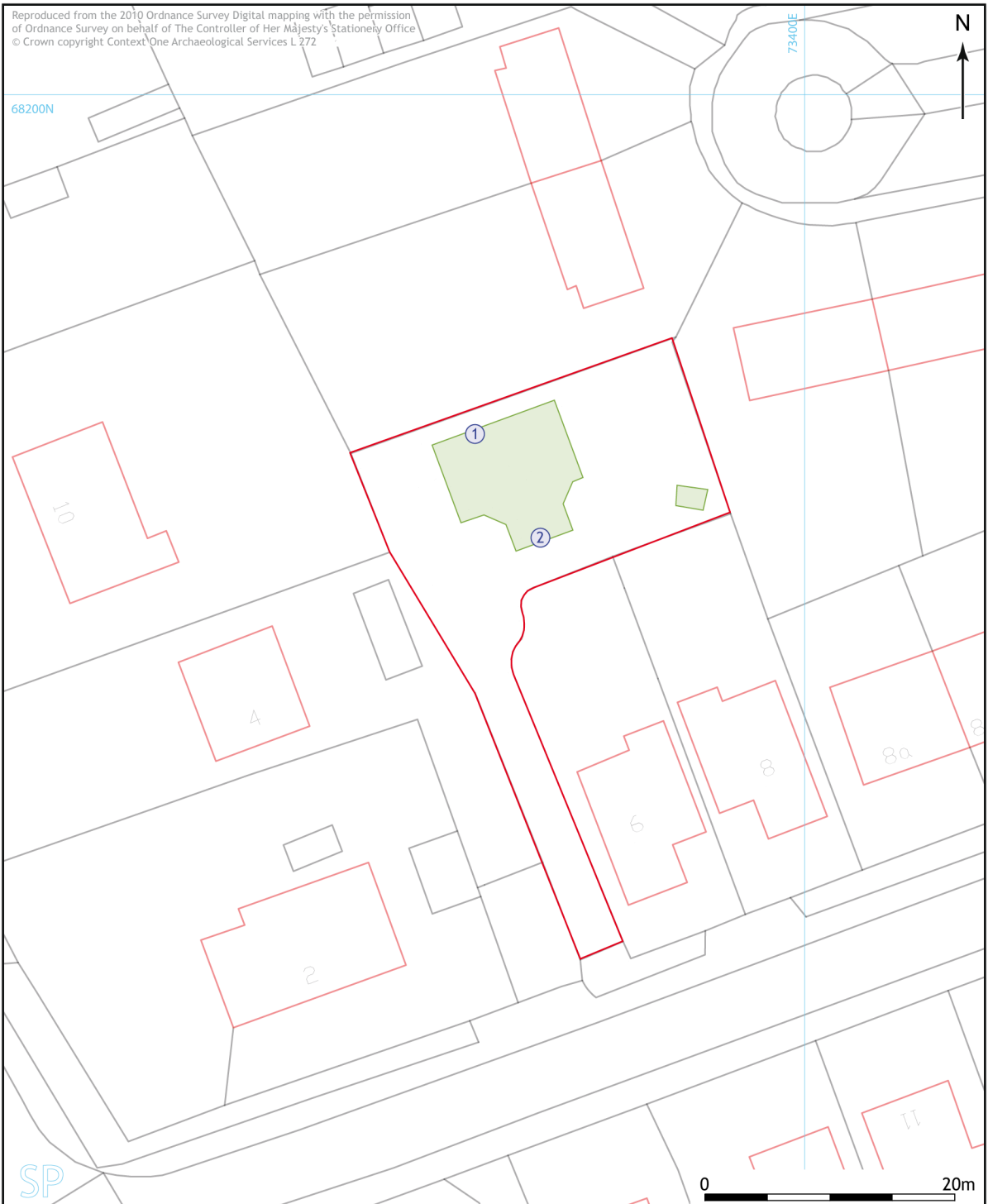
- 4.1 Prior to the attendance of archaeological staff, the Site was stripped of vegetation and a small mound of rubble relating to an existing temporary structure was removed.
- 4.2 Topsoil was removed with a 360 degree tracked machine and the Site was reduced to the final formation level (c. 50.73m above Ordnance Datum), following which, all strip foundations were excavated. A combination of both toothed and toothless buckets were used to excavate the foundation trenches due to the compact nature of the natural sediments.

Archaeological Methodology

- 4.3 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IfA) in 1995 (revised 1999). COAS adhered to the *Code of Conduct* issued by the IfA in 1985 (revised 2000), and *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (1990, revised September 2000), at all times during the course of the investigation. Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.
- 4.4 A qualified archaeologist was present on site to monitor all major groundworks relating to the development for the purpose of identifying and recording any archaeological features/deposits present.
- 4.5 The Archaeology Officer, Berkshire Archaeology was kept fully informed of the fieldwork schedule.
- 4.6 Two representative sections were recorded within the excavated foundation trenches using standard COAS pro-forma recording sheets and soil colours were recorded using a Munsell soil colour chart. A photographic record of the work was prepared and included shots of the excavated area and working shots to illustrate the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.



PROJECT TITLE		
Land Adjacent to 4 Wychelm Road, Shinfield, Wokingham, Berkshire		
FIGURE TITLE		
Site setting		
SCALE	PROJECT CODE	FIGURE NO.
as shown	COAS/WBF/10/WRS	1



<p> site boundary area of archaeological investigation X location of profiles </p>	<p>PROJECT TITLE Land Adjacent to 4 Wychelm Road, Shinfield, Wokingham, Berkshire</p>		
	<p>FIGURE TITLE Detailed site setting showing areas of archaeological investigation and location of profiles</p>		
	<p>SCALE as shown</p>	<p>PROJECT CODE COAS/WBF/10/WRS</p>	<p>FIGURE NO. 2</p>

5. Results and Conclusion

Soil Sequence and Geology

- 5.1 A simple geological soil sequence was recorded across the Site. This comprised very dark grey (10YR 3/2) clay/silt/sand/gravel topsoil (100/200), overlying light greyish brown (10YR 6/2) natural river gravel (101/201), which in turn overlay dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) clay natural (102/202).
- 5.2 No archaeological features/deposits were observed and no archaeological artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.

6. Archive

- 6.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of digital images in .jpg format and the written paper record - including profile log sheets and sketch drawings. The archive will be prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *Environmental Standards for the Permanent Storage of Excavated Material from Archaeological Sites* (UKIC 1984, Conservation Guidelines 3)/ *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC 1990)/ *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992)/ *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991). Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with Reading Museum within 12 months following the submission of this report.
- 6.2 Copies of the Watching Brief report will be deposited with:

Mr Stuart Price
4 Wychelm Road
Shinfield
Wokingham
Berkshire

Berkshire Archaeology
Central Library
Abbey Square
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 3BQ

7. COAS Acknowledgements

- 7.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Mr Stuart Price for his kind assistance throughout the course of the investigation, and Ms Mary O'Donoghue, for curatorial advice.

8. Bibliography

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