

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**44 BRIGHTWALTON,  
NEWBURY,  
WEST BERKSHIRE  
NGR SU 4265 7924**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT**

*On behalf of*

**Jonathan Mark Dennis Architects**

**JANUARY 2011**

**REPORT FOR** Jonathan Mark Dennis Architects  
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**JMHS Project No:** 2353

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## ***Summary***

*John Moore Heritage Services concluded an archaeological evaluation of a proposed residential development site on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2011. Two trenches, each 10m in length and 1.30m wide, were excavated to reveal the underlying natural geology.*

*The excavation uncovered numerous garden related features, all of modern date.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location** (*Figure 1*)

The site, 44 Brightwalton, is located to the south of Ash Close in the southern part of Brightwalton (NGR SU 4265 7924) just to the south of the church of All Saints. The British Geological Survey (Sheet 267) shows that the area has superficial Head deposits of clay, silt, sand, stone, gravel and some chalk.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

A planning application (10/02919/FULD) for the demolition of existing detached garage annexe and construction of new replacement garage/annexe to provide access to rear of garden for proposed detached dwelling and garage at 44 Brightwalton (and Land to the Rear), Brightwalton, Newbury, Berkshire has been submitted to West Berkshire Council. The Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council advised that an archaeological evaluation should be carried out prior to determination of the application.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The settlement has a long recorded history, being first mentioned in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and features in Domesday, suggesting late Saxon origins.

The earliest archaeological evidence from the village of Brightwalton is in the form of flints and pottery imprecisely dated to the prehistoric and Roman period (HER MWB6424, SU 42550 79350). No features have been found associated with these objects.

The first reference to the manor at Brightwalton is in AD 939 when King Athelstan granted 15 hides to Abingdon Abbey (VCH 1924, 48-51). A manor complex, therefore, existed in the tenth century.

Archaeological investigations in advance of a development on an adjacent site discovered a large medieval ditch and bank, which runs into the application site although south of the proposed development. No other remains were found. The feature may mark the boundary to the medieval settlement. There are several important historic buildings in the village including timber framed houses, two of which stand adjacent to the current application site, that may date to the later medieval period.

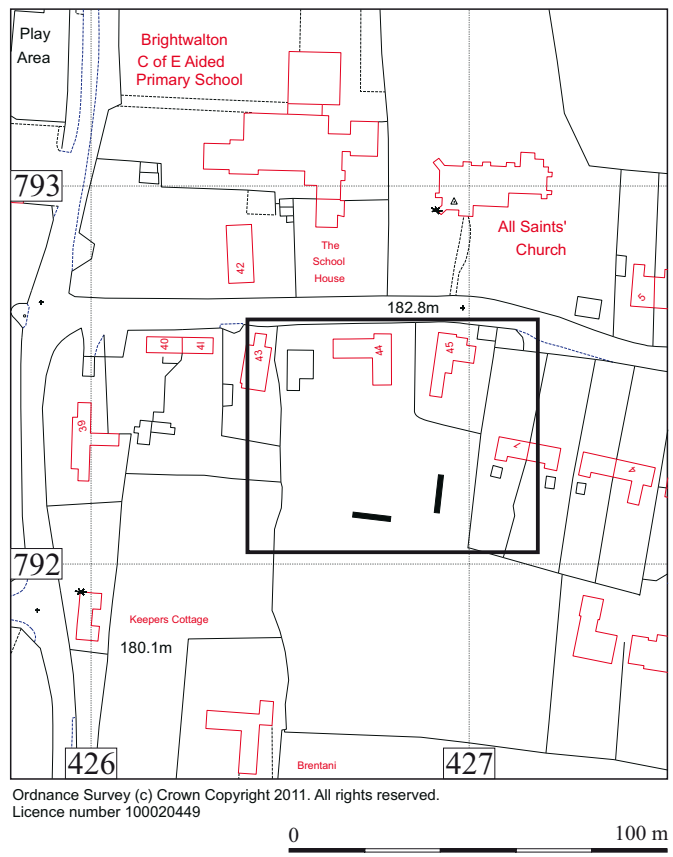


Figure 1. Site location

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains.
- To determine and understand the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
- In particular does evidence survive on the site for the Saxon or medieval settlement?
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any significant archaeological remains.
- To make public the results of both investigations.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

In response to West Berkshire Council Archaeological Service's requirement a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with West Berkshire Council and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of two trial trenches across the site (Fig. 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

### **3.2 Methodology**

The trenching sample required was achieved through the excavation of two 10m long trenches, numbered 1 and 2.

All trenches were 1.3 m wide and were excavated by a 0.75T mini-digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand prior to limited hand excavation of any identified archaeological deposits.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced. The trenches were backfilled after recording.

Mr Duncan Coe of West Berkshire Council monitored the work.

## **4 RESULTS**

All features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in () indicate feature fills or deposits of material.

### **4.1 Excavation Results (Figure 2)**

The lowest deposit in the area was the natural orange-brown clay with flints (1/9) and (2/9).

#### **Trench 1**

Cut into the natural at the eastern end of Trench 1 was a small ditch, 1/6. This had an irregular cut with a sharp, steep eastern side whilst the western edge had two breaks of slope, the first sharp but shallow, and the second gradual but turning steep sided to meet the eastern edge. The cut 1/6 was 1.25m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.50m. This was filled with a firm mid brown clay deposit (1/7) which was heavily disturbed by root action and had frequent flint nodule inclusions. The deposit (1/7) contained two pieces of pottery.

A subsoil deposit (1/2) was lying over the ditch fill (1/7). It was 0.10m in depth and extended the full 10m of the trench. Deposit (1/2) was a firm, mid brown, clayey silt with moderate flint nodule inclusions.

Directly above the subsoil (1/2) was a series of three related deposits. Deposit (1/5) was a firm, mid brown clayey silt with frequent inclusions of flint nodules, broken brick and crushed stone and occasional charcoal flecks. The deposit was 0.95m wide and up to 0.30m in depth. Above this was deposit (1/4), a friable, light yellow-white chalky mortar. This deposit was also 0.95m in length, and was up to 0.03m in depth. Directly above deposit (1/4) was a friable, black, charcoal rich silt deposit (1/3), which had moderate crushed stone pieces. Deposit (1/3) was 0.95m in length and 0.03m in depth.

Above deposit (1/3) was the uppermost deposit, garden topsoil (1/1); this was a loose dark brown silt with frequent flint nodules and moderate brick fragments and tree roots. Deposit (1/1) extended the full length of the trench and was up to 0.60m deep.

Finally in Trench 1 there was a small post hole 1/8. This was cut through the subsoil (1/2) and filled with the top soil (1/1). The cut was shallow with regular gradually sloping sides and a rounded base. It was 0.20m wide and 0.10m deep.

#### **Trench 2**

Cut into the natural towards the northern end of Trench 2 was a small linear ditch 2/5. This was 1.1m wide and the full width of the trench, 1.30m; it was not fully excavated and so was only known to be more than 0.20m deep. It had a sharp break of slope at the top with gradually sloping sides. Ditch 2/5 was filled by deposit (2/4), a compact yellow-brown clay with moderate flint nodules. Like the ditch cut 2/5, it was 1.1m wide and 1.30m long and was not fully excavated due to pieces of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery

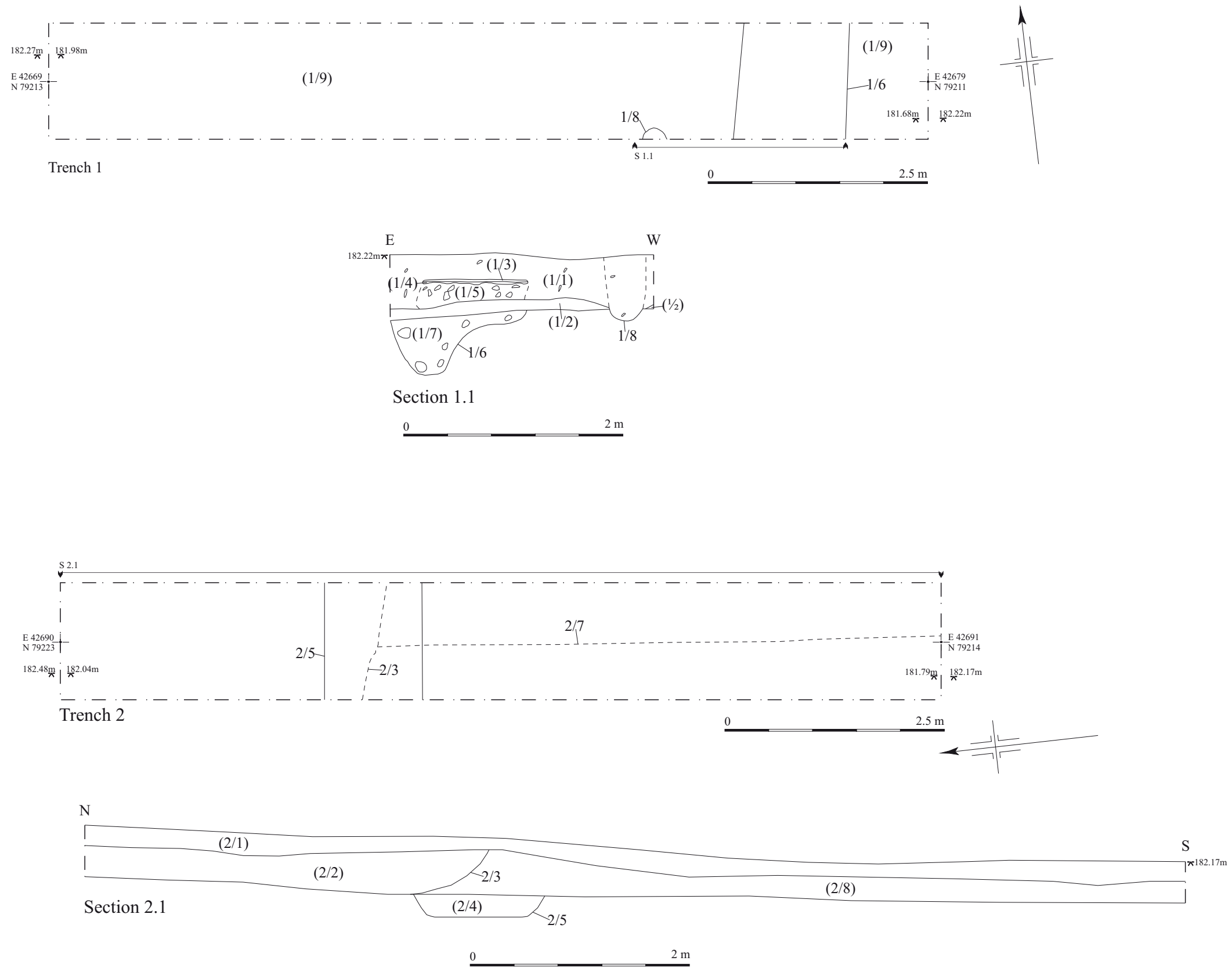


Figure 2. Trenches 1 & 2 plans and sections



and a fragment of brick being recovered early on.

Directly above the ditch was a subsoil deposit (2/8), a moderate, dark yellow-brown silt clay with very occasional gravel. This was about 0.20m deep and the width of the trench, 1.30m. It extended 6.4m from the south.

Cut into the subsoil (2/8) was the sharp cut 2/3, with a concave side and flat base. This was up to 0.3m deep and 1.3m wide, it extended 3.6m from the north of the trench. This cut was filled with deposit (2/2), a loose bright yellow-brown silty clay with very occasional large gravel and moderate small gravels.

Also cut into the subsoil (2/8) and cutting (2/2) was a long feature only seen in plan on the west side of the trench. The cut, 2/7, extended 6m from the south edge of the trench, was 0.65m wide and up to 0.20m deep. It had a sharp break of slope at the top with gradual concave sides and a rounded base. This cut was filled with deposit (2/6), a dark, grey-brown slightly sticky clay loam with moderate gravel inclusions. Like the cut this was 6m long, 0.65m wide and up to 0.20m deep.

Above deposit (2/2) was the uppermost deposit in Trench 2, (2/1) the topsoil. This deposit (2/1) was a sticky, mid dark grey-brown clay loam with occasional gravel inclusions. It was 0.20m thick and covered the entire extent of the trench.

## 4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The excavation of the trenches took place during rain and sleet. Features were easily identified against the orange natural.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Pottery by David Gilbert

The pottery assemblage comprised 3 sherds with a total weight of 6g. It comprised wares of post-medieval date similar to those noted at the Reading Waterfront excavations (Underwood 1997, 145).

**BWPW:** Blue and white printed ware, late 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century

**WHEW:** White/patterned ware, mass produced, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type*

| Tr | Cntxt | BWPW |    | WHEW |    | Date  |
|----|-------|------|----|------|----|-------|
|    |       | No   | Wt | No   | Wt |       |
| 1  | 7     | 1    | 2  | 1    | 2  | 19thC |
| 2  | 4     | 1    | 2  |      |    | 19thC |
|    | Total | 1    | 4  | 1    | 2  |       |

## 5.2 Brick by Gwilym Williams

The one piece of brick was examined by naked eye with no magnification. It comprised a small fragment of two faces. One face appeared to have a sand-roughened texture with a small amount of mortar adhering; the other a greyish glazed or vitrified face. The fabric was a very hard slightly purplish brown with evidence of reduction where the fabric was greyer. Small fragments of coarse sand were visible.

Table 1: Brick by number and weight (in g) of fragments per context

| Cntxt | No | Wt | Date                                 |
|-------|----|----|--------------------------------------|
| (2/4) | 1  | 26 | 19 <sup>th</sup> /20 <sup>th</sup> C |
| Total | 1  |    |                                      |

The fragment is clearly from a late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century brick at the earliest. This accords with the pottery

## 5.3 Environmental Remains

Due to the nature of the deposits encountered no environmental samples were taken

## 6 DISCUSSION

The upper features within Trench 1 appear to be related to the use of the area as a garden in the relatively modern past. The firm deposit (1/5) provides a strong base of a garden path with the compact mortar deposit (1/4) and charcoal rich deposit (1/3) forming a surface. The small posthole 1/8 is filled with the topsoil deposit (1/1) and so is something which has been removed recently. There are various wood sheds, a swimming pool and large wooden children's play houses near by and may be related to the construction of one of those.

The lower ditch in Trench 1 1/6 runs at right angles to ditch 2/5 in Trench 2, the fills (1/7) and (2/4) are similar and it is likely that the two are related boundaries. 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery was found in both ditches, and the brick found in (2/4) is late 19<sup>th</sup> century at the earliest. As the 1881 Ordnance Survey map shows, the site was already built on with various garden plots so it is likely that the ditches are small plot boundaries for a private garden. The garden path ((1/3) (1/4) (1/5)) follows the same alignment as 1/6.

The other features within Trench 2 also appear to be garden related. The area in which Trench 2 is located is currently being used as a vegetable plot. Due to the size of cut 2/7 and the modern date this is most likely a slightly earlier garden bed. The fill of cut 2/3, (2/2) appears to be very similar in colour and composition to the subsoil deposit (2/8) and is most likely the result of the garden being worked over time with the subsoil becoming redeposited.

Trench 1 had a considerably greater depth of topsoil than Trench 2. Trench 1 was within an established lawn and it appears that soil was brought in to cover the garden path when it went out of use, rather than removing it. This was then worked over and a lawn laid at the new height.

Although an evaluation carried out in 1994 on an adjacent ground plot (The Old Coach Works) uncovered a medieval bank and ditch headed in the direction of this evaluation, no evidence was found on site.

There is no evidence within the excavated area of the Saxon or Medieval settlement and based on the evidence of the evaluation there are no significant archaeological remains.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

#### Paper Record

The project brief

Written Scheme of Investigation

The drawn records

The project report

The primary site records

#### Physical Record

The finds

The archive and finds are currently maintained by John Moore Heritage Services. The archive will be transferred to West Berkshire Museum

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1999: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* Revised 2008

Stephen Weaver and Steve Ford 1994 *An Archaeological Evaluation for Bewley Homes Plc*

Underwood, C, 1997 Pottery in J Hawkes and PJ Fasham *Excavations on Reading Waterfront Sites, 1979-1988* Wessex Archaeology Rep **5**, 142-161

**APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

| Context         | Type    | Description   | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Length (m) | Finds             | Date   |
|-----------------|---------|---|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>Trench 1</b> |         |   |           | 1.3       | 10         |                   |  |
| 1/1             | Deposit | Topsoil   | 0.5       | Tr.       | Tr.        | -                 | Modern   |
| 1/2             | Deposit | Subsoil   | 0.1       | Tr.       | Tr.        | -                 | -  |
| 1/3             | Deposit | Friable, black, charcoal rich silt with frequent crushed stone.                           | 0.03      | 0.95      | 1.3        | -                 | -  |
| 1/4             | Deposit | Friable, light yellow white, chalky mortar.   | 0.03      | 0.95      | 1.3        | -                 | -  |
| 1/5             | Deposit | Firm, mid brown, clayey silt with frequent flint nodules, broken brick and crushed stone. | 0.30      | 0.95      | 1.3        | -                 | -  |
| 1/06            | Cut     | Linear ditch  | 0.50      | 1.25      | 1.3        | -                 | -  |
| 1/07            | Deposit | Firm, mid brown clay with frequent flint nodules, occasional pottery.                     | 0.50      | 1.25      | 1.3        | Pottery           | Modern (19 <sup>th</sup> century)  |
| 1/08            | Cut     | Posthole  | 0.10      | 0.20      | 0.20       | -                 | -  |
| 1/09            | Deposit | Natural   | -         | Tr.       | Tr.        | -                 | -  |
| <b>Trench 2</b> |         |   | 0.3 - 0.5 | 1.3       | 10         |                   |  |
| 2/1             | Deposit | Topsoil   | -         | Tr.       | Tr.        | -                 | Modern   |
| 2/2             | Deposit | Loose, bright yellow brown silty clay with occasional large and small gravel              | 0.35      | Tr.       | Tr.        | -                 | -  |
| 2/3             | Cut     | Unknown (?garden bed)   | 0.3       | 1.3       | 3.6        | -                 | -  |
| 2/4             | Deposit | Compact yellow brown clay with moderate flint nodules/pieces.                             | >0.2      | 1.3       | 1.1        | Pottery and Brick | Modern (late 19 <sup>th</sup> century to early 20 <sup>th</sup> century) |
| 2/5             | Cut     | Linear ditch  | >0.2      | 1.3       | 1.1        | -                 | -  |
| 2/6             | Deposit | Dark grey brown sticky clay loam with moderate large and small gravel.                    | 0.2       | 1.3       | 6          | -                 | -  |
| 2/7             | Cut     | Unknown (?garden bed)   | 0.2       | 1.3       | 6          | -                 | -  |
| 2/8             | Deposit | Moderate dark yellow brown silty clay with occasional gravel.                             | 0.2       | 1.3       | 6.4        | -                 | -  |
| 2/9             | Deposit | Natural   | -         | Tr.       | Tr.        | -                 | -  |