



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT
BRINDLES, KIDMORE END ROAD, EMMER GREEN,
READING, BERKSHIRE
NGR SU 71741 76640

On behalf of
Ms. S. Hancock-Green

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation on land belonging to the Brindles, Kidmore End Road, Emmer Green, near Reading, Berkshire. A total of three machine-dug trenches were excavated, comprising a total length of 47.50 metres. No archaeological features or remains were identified within the development area which had been heavily disturbed by the roots of orchard trees and conifers, and by a series of pits dug to grub out orchard tree root masses.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development area (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) is located within gardens to the west of the house called the Brindles off Kidmore End Road, Emmer Green near Reading, Berkshire (NGR SU 71741 76640) (Figure 1). It is bordered to the west by primary school grounds, to the north by a golf course, and to the south and east by existing residential buildings and properties. The underlying drift geology is Black Park Gravel Terrace deposits.

The existing ground level is relatively flat at *circa.* 80 metres above Ordnance Datum; and the Site currently consists of lawn and orchard trees, with a line of closely spaced conifers extending along the northern boundary of the Site.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning application number 08/00161/FUL that was submitted to Reading Borough Council proposed the construction of a two storey house on land adjacent to the Brindles, Kidmore End Road, Emmer Green, Reading. The Archaeological Officer of Berkshire Archaeology issued a *Brief* recommending an archaeological evaluation as the first stage in a potentially wider programme of archaeological investigation.

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) was commissioned to undertake this work, and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services to satisfy the requirements of the Brief (JMHS 2421/01). This *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) proposed the methodology by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out.

The WSI was accepted by the Berkshire County Archaeologist, and the archaeological evaluation took place on 7th-8th September 2011.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The Site was identified as being of archaeological potential by Berkshire Archaeology as it was situated close to where known archaeology had been previously identified. Three parchmark ring ditch features representing possible prehistoric round barrows have been identified on The Common Recreation Ground in Emmer Green *circa.* 160 metres east of the Site.

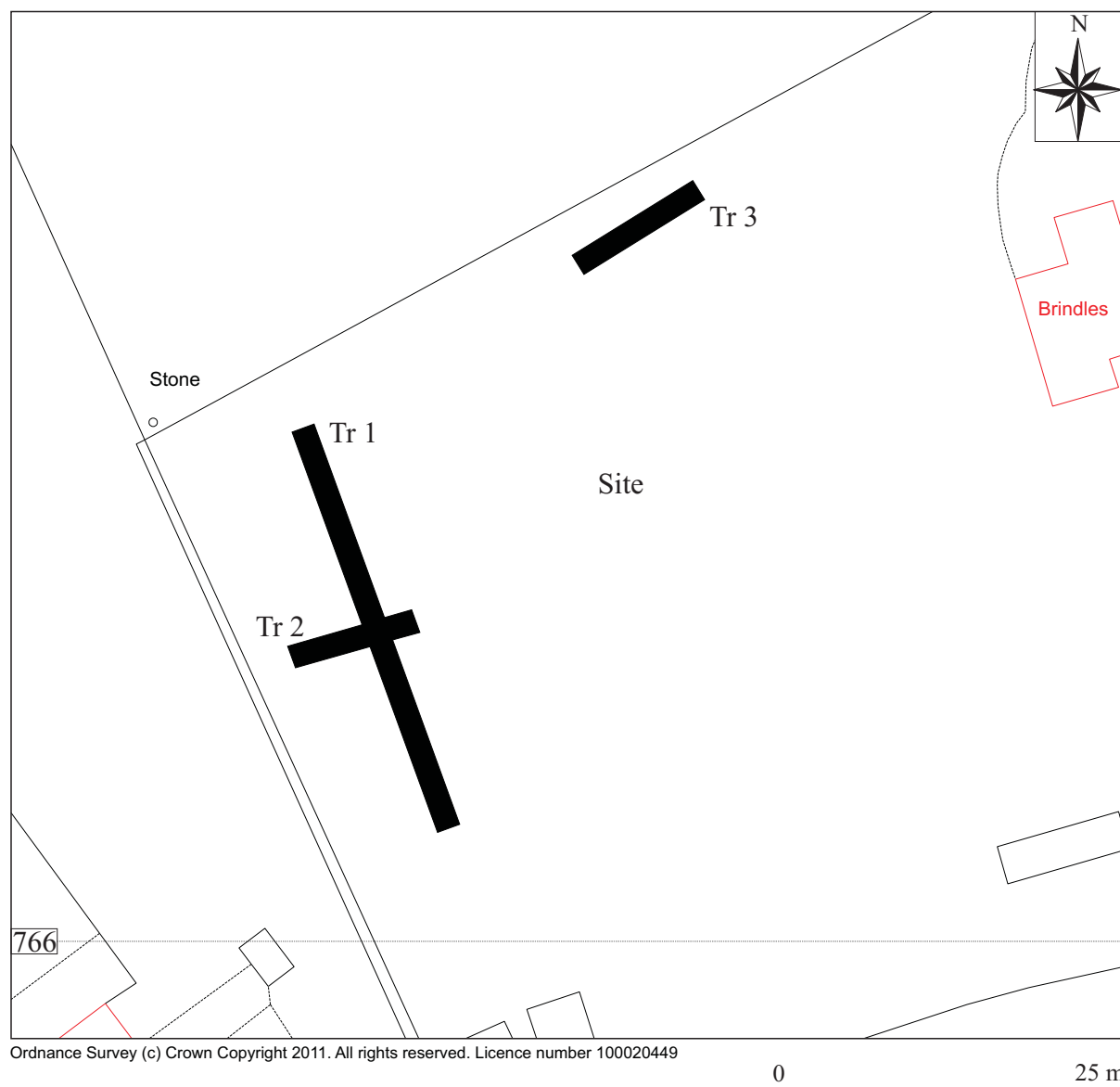
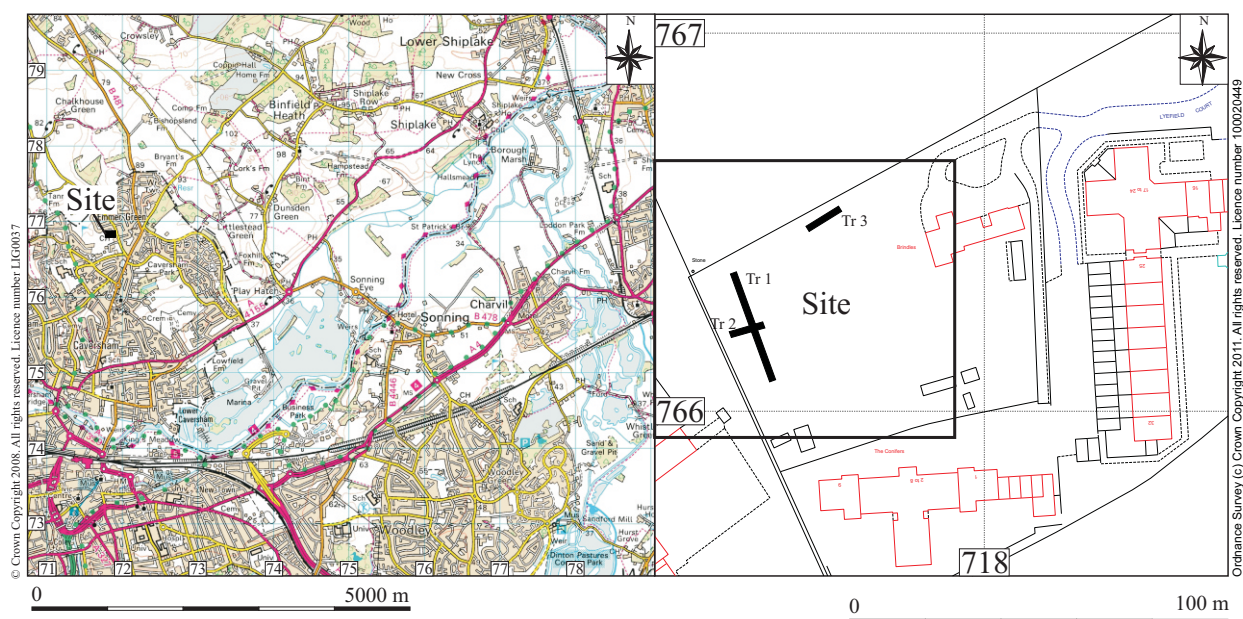


Figure 1. Site and trench location

A field evaluation undertaken in 2006 at Cedarcot, Lyefield Court *c.* 100m north-east of the Site recorded an Iron Age gully and three undated postholes (Ford 2006), whilst three late Bronze Age socketed axes were found during construction of the primary school. A watching brief undertaken during more recent construction work at the primary school in 2001 did not find any archaeological remains, however, nor did another evaluation carried out at 41-49 Grove Road in 2007. An evaluation and subsequent excavation in 2010 *c.* 165m south-west of the Site recorded late Iron Age and Romano-British cut features, and a late Iron Age gold stater coin was found close by at St Barnabas Road, Caversham in 1936.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the Site;
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered;
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;
- To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape;
- To determine the implications of the remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity;
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present;
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits;
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present;
- To address some of the key issues highlighted in the Solent Thames Research Framework, depending on the type and date of remains encountered;
- To inform the need for, and scope of, further phases of work to mitigate the impact of the proposed development

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to the Brief issued by Berkshire Archaeology, JMHS carried out the work, which initially comprised a proposed scheme for the mechanical excavation of three trial trenches 1.6m wide, with one trench 30m long, and two 15m long, their combined area representing a 5% sample of the Site. Trenches 1 and 2 (30m and

15m) were originally envisaged as a conjoined T-shaped layout, whilst Trench 3 was originally located along the line of the conifers bordering the north of the Site. Small sondages were machine-excavated to a greater depth at the ends of each trench in order to investigate any Palaeolithic deposits and artefacts that might be present in the underlying Black Park Gravel Terrace deposits.

3.2 Methodology

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the WSI and agreed with Berkshire Archaeology.

A two-tonne tracked 360-degree excavator fitted with a toothless 1.6m wide ditching bucket was used to excavate the trenches. Turf and topsoil were stockpiled on boards for reinstatement after excavation. Any archaeological deposits and features revealed would be cleaned by hand and recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. Archaeological features would have written, drawn and photographic records made of them, and all deposits and features would be assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in brackets () show feature fills or deposits of material. All context numbers are preceded by trench number and /. Details of individual trenches are presented in Appendix 1 – the context inventory – at the rear of this report.

All artefacts were to be collected and retained, and trenches without archaeology would have record photographs taken of their stripped areas, whilst photographs and drawings recorded representative sections of the deposits above the undisturbed natural subsoil. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

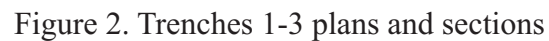
4 RESULTS

4.1 The Archaeological Results

Trench 1, originally intended to be 30m in length, could only be machined to a length of 28.20m due to the need to avoid large standing trees (Fig. 2). Similarly, Trench 2 forming the 15m ‘bar’ of the conjoined T-shaped layout could not be excavated fully due to the presence of a vegetable garden and an existing hedge. A smaller 9.30m long trench was therefore excavated at right angles across the middle of Trench 1. Trench 3 was repositioned 2-3m further to the south in order to avoid a row of standing conifer trees, and in the event also had to be shortened to 10m in order to avoid conifer and apple tree root systems.

The trenches and their contexts are listed in Appendix 1.

The topsoil extending across the Site consisted of dark grey-brown or grey brown silty sandy loam 0.18-0.35m thick, with a great deal of root disturbance. The mottled yellow, yellow brown and orange brown sandy gravel deposits beneath represented the Black Park Gravel Terrace deposits. Small sondages up to 0.60m deep were



machine-excavated at the end of each trench in order to investigate the underlying Black Park Gravel Terrace deposits, but no Palaeolithic artefacts were identified.

No archaeological features or remains were identified in any of the trenches. In Trenches 1 and 2, a series of subsquare and subrectangular pits were recorded, some clearly cut from a level contiguous with the existing topsoil layers (1/1) and (2/1) (Fig. 3). These represented grubbing-out pits of tree root boles, where orchard trees had been removed during the 1960s and 1970s. These were planned and photographed but not formally recorded. At the junction of Trenches 1 and 2, two possible posthole features were investigated. These contained the rotting remnants of modern machine-sawn wooden pegs, square in cross-section and painted; and clearly not more than a few decades old. These features were once again planned and photographed but not formally recorded (Fig. 4). Only a few fragments of machine-moulded 20th century ceramic tile and a modern marble were found in the topsoil in Trenches 1 and 2, and these finds were not retained.

In Trench 3 there was extensive root disturbance from the line of conifers planted 2-3m to the north of the trench (Fig. 5).

The Berkshire County Archaeologist Ms Fiona MacDonald inspected the Site on Thursday 8th September in order to monitor the fieldwork after the trenches had been machine excavated and then cleaned by hand. She concurred that only modern features were present and accepted the negative nature of the evaluation results.



Figure 3. Trench 1 looking north-west. The darker features are modern tree grubbing-out pits



Figure 4. Modern posthole at the intersection of Trenches 1-2. The void left by the rotting wooden post is visible



Figure 5. Trench 3 looking south-west, showing root disturbance

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place in clement, largely dry conditions with good light and visibility.

4.3 Finds and Environmental Remains

No archaeological finds were identified. No palaeo-environmental samples were taken.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of the evaluation were negative, and the area directly affected by the footprint of the proposed building did not contain any identifiable archaeological features or deposits.

If the proposed development takes place an access drive will be constructed along the line of the conifer trees immediately north of Trench 3. These trees were planted approximately 2.00m apart from one another, however, and even if any archaeological remains were once present these would have been subject to considerable damage from root systems. If these conifers were removed and their root systems grubbed-out then this would itself cause considerable disturbance to adjacent deposits, but as no archaeology was identified in Trench 3 this is not considered a potential problem.

Given the results of the evaluation, it is not considered likely that the proposed groundwork will impact upon any significant archaeological remains.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage. 1991. *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*. London: English Heritage.

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Appendix 1: Trench and Archaeological Context Inventory

	Context	Type	Description and finds	L (m)	B (m)	D(m)	Levels	Date	Interpretation
Trench 1									
	(1/1)	Layer	Friable mid to dark grey brown silty sandy loam.	Across trench	Across trench	0.25-035m	82.82m-82.85m	Modern	Topsoil
	(1/2)	Layer	Compact, mottled light yellow, yellow brown & orange brown sandy gravel, with iron panning and manganese staining.	Across trench	Across trench	-	82.55m-82.56m	-	Natural subsoil
Trench 2									
	(2/1)	Layer	Friable mid to dark grey brown silty sandy loam.	Across trench	Across trench	0.30m	82.85m-82.94m	Modern	Topsoil
	(2/2)	Layer	Compact, mottled light yellow, yellow brown & orange brown sandy gravel, with iron panning and manganese staining.	Across trench	Across trench	-	82.37m-82.59	-	Natural subsoil
Trench 3									
	(3/1)	Layer	Friable mid to dark grey brown sandy loam.	Across trench	Across trench	0.20m	83.08m-83.27m	Modern	Topsoil
	(3.2)	Layer	Compact, mottled light yellow & yellow brown sandy gravel, with iron panning and manganese staining.	Across trench	Across trench	-	82.73m-82.80m	-	Natural subsoil