

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION ON LAND OFF FOREST ROAD,  
WOKINGHAM, BERKSHIRE**

**NGR SU 8122 7106**

*On behalf of*

**Luff Developments Ltd**

**NOVEMBER 2012**

**REPORT FOR** Luff Developments Ltd  
The Granary  
Ashridgewood Farm  
Warren House Road  
Wokingham  
RG40 5RD

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**FIELDWORK** 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012

**REPORT ISSUED** 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012

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**Site Code** HUFR12  
**JMHS Project No:** 2676  
**Archive Location** The archive is currently held by JMHS and will be deposited with an appropriate repository in due course.

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) undertook an archaeological evaluation south of Warren Farm, Forest Road, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU 8122 7106) in advance of the erection of facilities building, ménage and associated works, formation of new access and change of use of land to keeping horses and kitchen garden (Planning Ref: F/2012/0651).*

*Three 15m long evaluation trenches were excavated over the areas to be affected by the new development. A simple sequence of overburden was recorded in the trenches. One shallow scoop was within Trench 3. No finds were recovered from the feature or the trenches.*

*Eight test pits were excavated by machine in the areas designated for a new kitchen garden and ménage. An attempt was made to sieve for finds but wet conditions made this impracticable. As a result the topsoil was hand troweled and one sherd of post-medieval pottery alongside other insignificant modern finds was recovered (not retained).*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The site is located south of Warren Farm, adjacent to Forest Road, Wokingham (NGR SU 8122 7106) approximately 0.5ha in area and at a height of 67m OD. The current land use is pasture and the underlying geology is Sixth Terrace Gravel deposits overlying London Clay (BGS 1981 sheet 268).

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Wokingham Borough Council has granted permission for the erection of facilities building, ménage and associated works, formation of new access and change of use of land to keeping horses and kitchen garden (F/2012/0651). Berkshire Archaeology was consulted regarding this development and advised that a programme of archaeological work was required, which would be a preliminary archaeological evaluation in the area. This was followed by a *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)* which outlined the method by which the first stage of the archaeological work would be carried out in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains of significance.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The site is located in an area of archaeological potential highlighted by archaeological research investigations undertaken adjacent to the proposed development. Field walking was undertaken as part of the East Berkshire Archaeological Survey (EWK14). This recovered a number of find-scatters dating to the prehistoric and Roman periods (MWK4943, 4992, 13468, 13494, 13498, 14072).

The concentration of Roman artefacts in Ashridge Wood (MWK4992) was further investigated but no features were located within the examined area (EWK15).

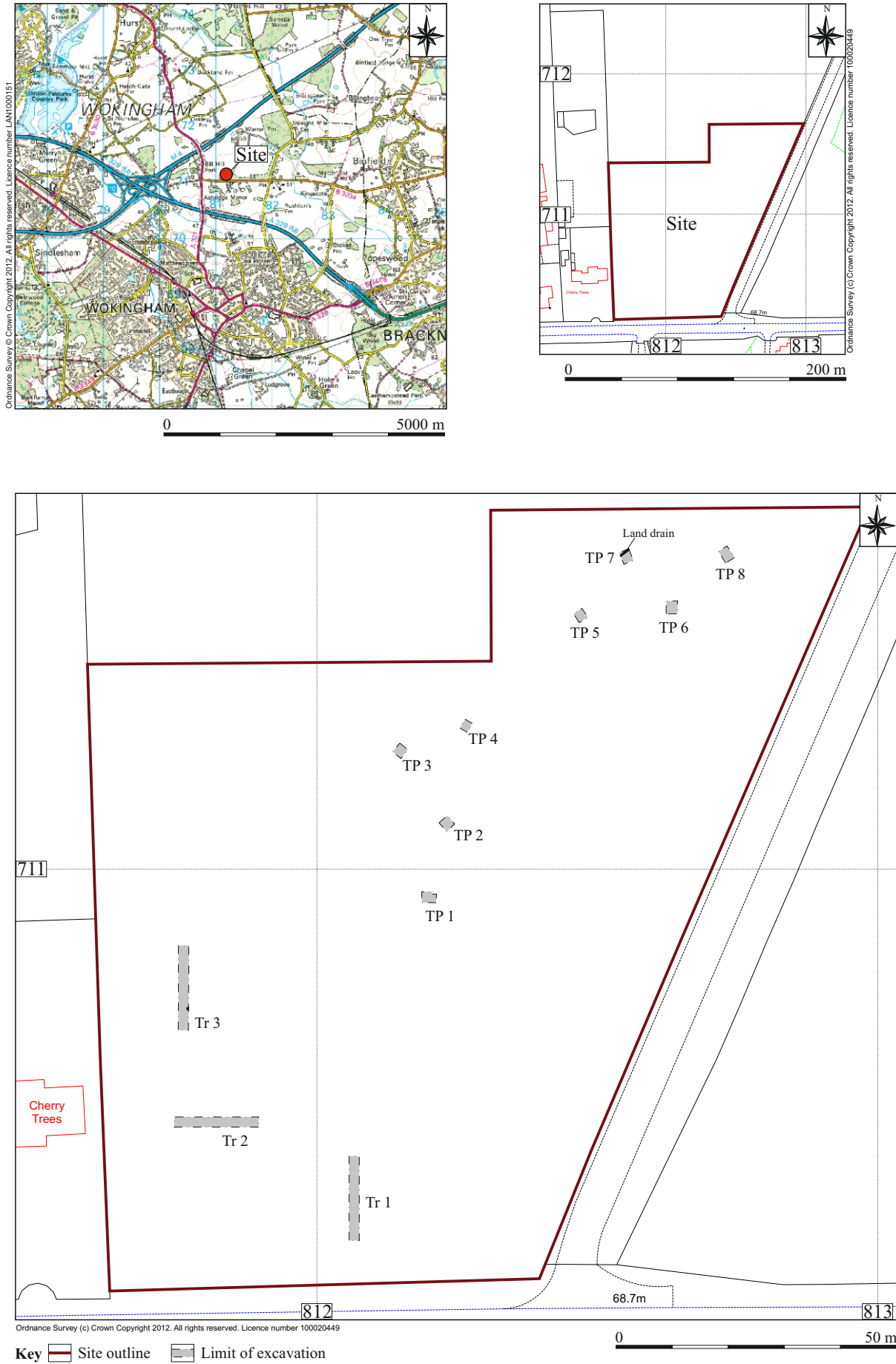


Figure 1. Site location

Five trial trenches were excavated along the length of the access road to the nearby Warren Farm by Foundations Archaeology in 2006 (ERM630). A single undated posthole (MRM16005) was located suggesting a low-moderate density of activity in the immediate area.

The site is situated to the west of Ashridge Wood. There was a park at Ashridge in 1319 when the Earl of Lancaster complained that intruders had broken in and trampled down his corn growing there (MRM 16050). A 13th century enclosed deer park is shown nearby on Norden's map of 1607. The park appears to have been extended in the post medieval period. The park is also depicted on Rocque's map 1761 and an estate map of 1816 (MRW792).

The above information was obtained from a 650m radius HER search from Berkshire Archaeology and the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2012).

## 2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The main aim of the investigation was to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site and the depth of soil deposits. The aims of the investigation are set within the limitations of a 1.4% sample area.

More specific objectives were to;

- inform the need for, and scope of, further phases of work to mitigate the impact of the proposed development;
- 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. The forms in which such evidence may be present will be determined in accordance with the guidelines set out in English Heritage's *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* and *Geoarchaeology: Using earth sciences to understand the archaeological record*;
- to determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present; and

- to address some of the key issues highlighted in the Solent Thames Research Framework. This will depend on the type and date of remains encountered.

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008), and John Moore Heritage Services *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2012).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

The investigation involved the machine excavation of three 15m long trenches and eight test pits *c.* 1.5m<sup>2</sup>.

The locations of the trenches were plotted using tapes measured from known points on a survey drawing of the site. The test pits were located using GPS equipment.

The test pits were placed in the location of the proposed kitchen garden and ménage. An attempt was made to sieve the soil from the test pits in the hope of retrieving datable finds. Due to adverse weather conditions the soil was too wet to effectively sieve. The methodology was therefore changed to simply troweling through the topsoil.

Any suspected archaeological features revealed were cleaned and investigated by hand and recorded in plan before being excavated. All archaeological features were recorded by written, drawn and photographic record. The topsoil from the trenches was scanned for any finds.

No samples suitable for soil sampling to recover palaeobotanical, paleozoological and pedological evidence were taken.

Site procedures followed IfA guidelines and the requirements of the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2012).

### **4 RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Field Results**

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

##### **4.1.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 1)**

Trench 1 was excavated to a length of 15m (1.9m wide) and to heights of 67.86m AOD at the southern end and 67.74m AOD at the northern end. Machine excavation ceased at the top of the natural.

The stratigraphy within the trench consisted of the following layers (earliest to latest). The natural bright yellow clay silt with gravel patches was at the base of the trench (1/02). Overlying this was 0.30m thick light greyish brown silty clay topsoil (1/01).

No archaeological features or finds were within the trench.

#### 4.1.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 1)

Trench 2 was excavated to a length of 15m (1.9m wide) and to heights of 67.56m AOD at the eastern end and 67.57m AOD at the western end. Machine excavation ceased at the top of the natural.

The stratigraphy within the trench consisted of the following layers (earliest to latest). The natural bright yellow clay silt with gravel patches was at the base of the trench (2/02). Overlying this was 0.30m thick light greyish brown silty clay topsoil (2/01).

No archaeological features or finds were within the trench.

#### 4.1.3 Trench 3 (Figs. 1 & 2)

Trench 3 was excavated to a length of 15m (1.9m wide) and to heights of 67.52m AOD at the southern end and 67.37m AOD at the northern end. Machine excavation ceased at the top of the natural.

The stratigraphy within the trench consisted of the following layers (earliest to latest). The natural bright yellow clay silt with gravel patches was at the base of the trench (3/02). Overlying this was 0.30m thick light greyish brown silty clay topsoil (3/01).

#### *Discrete features*

A sub circular feature 3/04 (Fig 2; Section 1), 0.30m wide with concave sides and a gently rounded base was observed protruding from the eastern baulk section. This shallow scoop was filled by 0.10m thick light brownish grey silty clay (3/03) with no finds.

#### 4.2 Test Pits (Fig. 1)

Eight test pits were excavated by machine to the surface of the natural geology. The topsoil was then hand investigated for any archaeological artefacts. A summary of the test pits is tabulated below.

Test Pit	Context	Topsoil Depth	Number of finds	Type of find	Date
1	TP1/01	0.30	6	Glass & pottery	Modern
2	TP2/01	0.30	1	Pottery	Post medieval
3	TP3/01	0.28	/		
4	TP4/01	0.30	2	Glass & pottery	Modern
5	TP5/01	0.30	/		
6	TP6/01	0.30	/		
7	TP7/01	0.30	1	Ceramic	Modern
8	TP8/01	0.30	/		

Table 1; Summary of Test Pits



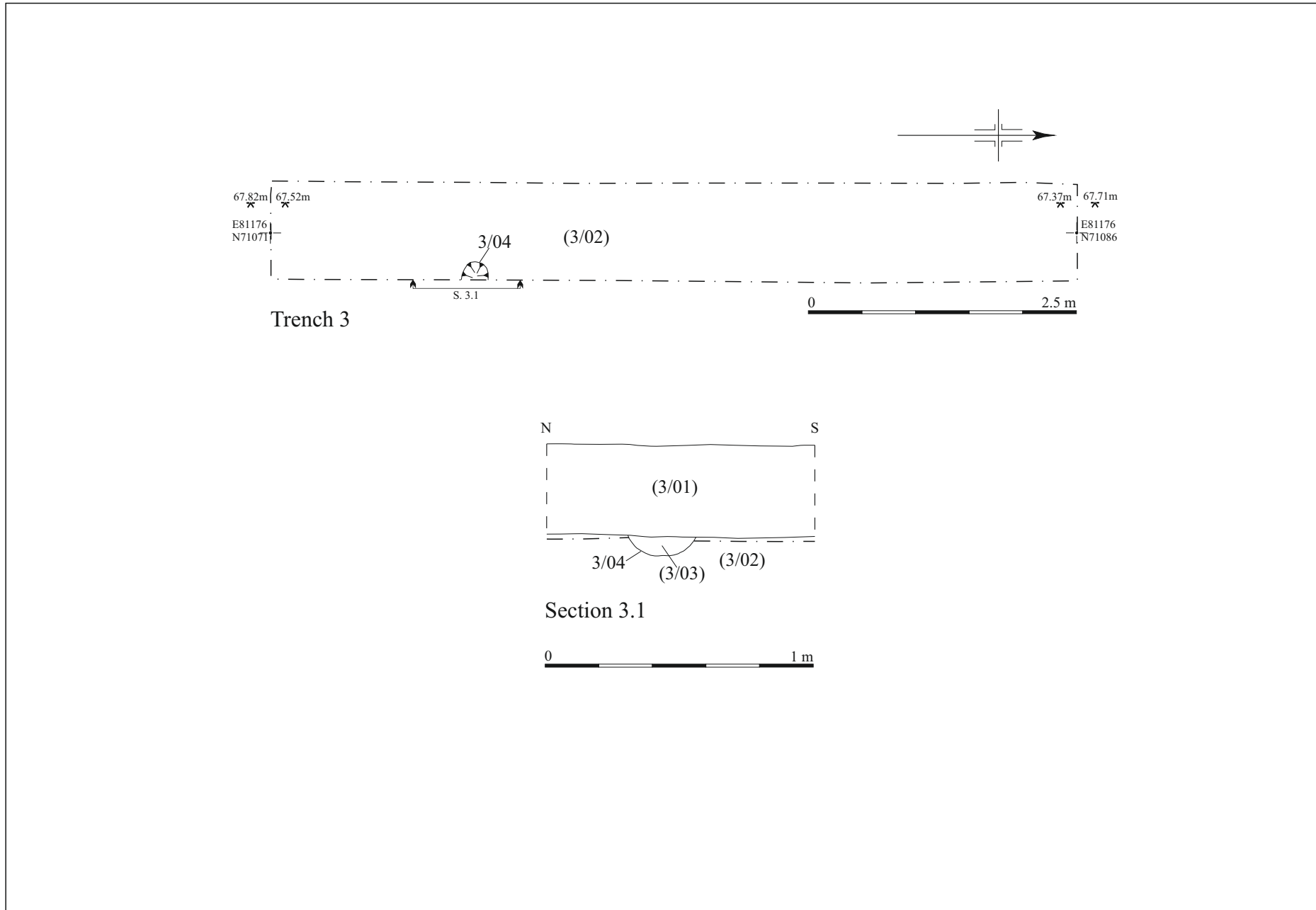


Figure 2. Trench 3 and section 3.1

### 4.3 Reliability of Results

The excavations were undertaken in adverse weather conditions with heavy icy rain and strong winds. The wet ground made sieving impractical and a troweling strategy was agreed. The work was monitored on site by Fiona MacDonald (Principal Archaeologist at Berkshire Archaeology).

## 5 THE FINDS *by Paul Riccoboni*

The finds recovered from the evaluation were all modern except one body sherd of coarse post-medieval pottery from (TP2/01) which weighed 16g. The sherd is undiagnostic but its red earthenware fabric would suggest a post-medieval date; 16th–19th century.

Context	Description	Count	Weight (g)	Date
TP1/01	Glass	4	18	Modern
	Pot	2	6	
TP2/01	Pot	1	16	Post-medieval
TP4/01	Glass tile	1	42	Modern
		1	26	
TP7/01	Ceramic field drain	1	171	Modern

Table 2; Finds quantification

## 6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation was successful in determining the archaeological potential of the site and the character of one below ground feature. The investigation determined a simple stratigraphic sequence of topsoil directly overlying natural substrate. It was clear from the shallow excavations that no archaeological features of significance will be destroyed by the new development.

The test pits were useful and helped to determine the archaeological potential of the proposed kitchen garden and ménage and depths of below ground deposits. No significant archaeological remains were recovered from the test pits.

A confidence rating is high that no archaeological remains will be affected by the new development the best possible results were achieved, albeit in adverse weather conditions.

## 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

### The Finds

The finds will not be retained for the archive.

The archive is currently maintained by John Moore Heritage Services. The archive will be transferred to a museum who will accept the archive when space is available.

## **8. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

British Geological Survey Sheet 1981 *Sheet 268; Reading; Solid and Drift Geology Edition.*

Institute of Field Archaeologists 2008 *Standards and Guidance for archaeological field evaluations.*

John Moore Heritage Services 2012 *F/2012/0651- Warren Farm, Forest Road, Wokingham, Berkshire; Archaeological Field Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation.* Unpub JMHS Doc. 2676. Author; Gilbert, D.



Plate 1; General view of Trench 3 looking north (1m scales)

## APPENDIX 1; Summary of all contexts within trenches

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
1/01	Deposit	Dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil	0.30m	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
1/02	Deposit	Bright yellow clay with patches of gravels-Natural	>0.10	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
2/01	Deposit	Dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil	0.30	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
2/02	Deposit	Bright yellow clay with patches of gravels-Natural	>0.10	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
3/01	Deposit	Dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil	0.30	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
3/02	Deposit	Bright yellow clay with patches of gravels-Natural	>0.10	Tr.	Tr.	None	/
3/03	Deposit	Light brownish grey silty clay	0.10	0.30	Unknown	None	/
3/04	Cut	A sub circular shaped shallow scoop	0.10	0.30	Unknown	n/a	/