

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
OF
LAND AT WINDSOR END, BEACONSFIELD
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NGR SU 9448 8987**

On behalf of

CgMs

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REPORT FOR CgMs
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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land at Windsor End, Beaconsfield. Four trenches were excavated to the natural geological formation. These revealed 18th century or later garden features including a well.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site is located at Windsor End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. The site is bound to the north by 'The Old School, to the east by the rear of properties fronting Windsor End, to the south by fields and to the west by Bradbury House and fields. The site is centred at National Grid Reference SU94488987

1.2 Planning Background

The construction of nine properties with associated gardens to the rear is proposed on land at Windsor End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) recommended that an archaeological evaluation be conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which had been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. This was implemented as the proposed development was within an area of archaeological potential. This is in line with NPPF. Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Services prepared a Brief for the first phase of the work, namely a field evaluation. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* agreed with the county planning archaeologist proposed a method to satisfy the requirements of the Brief.

1.3 Archaeological Background

A desk-based Assessment of the site was conducted by CgMs (2012) it noted that the study site would have lain within the southern boundaries of the Medieval town. Windsor End was one of the major routes into the town during the Medieval period and as such it can be anticipated that properties would have fronted onto Windsor End whilst evidence of backlands activity such as gardening, butchery, refuse deposition and water storage would have occupied the rear to these properties

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- 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.

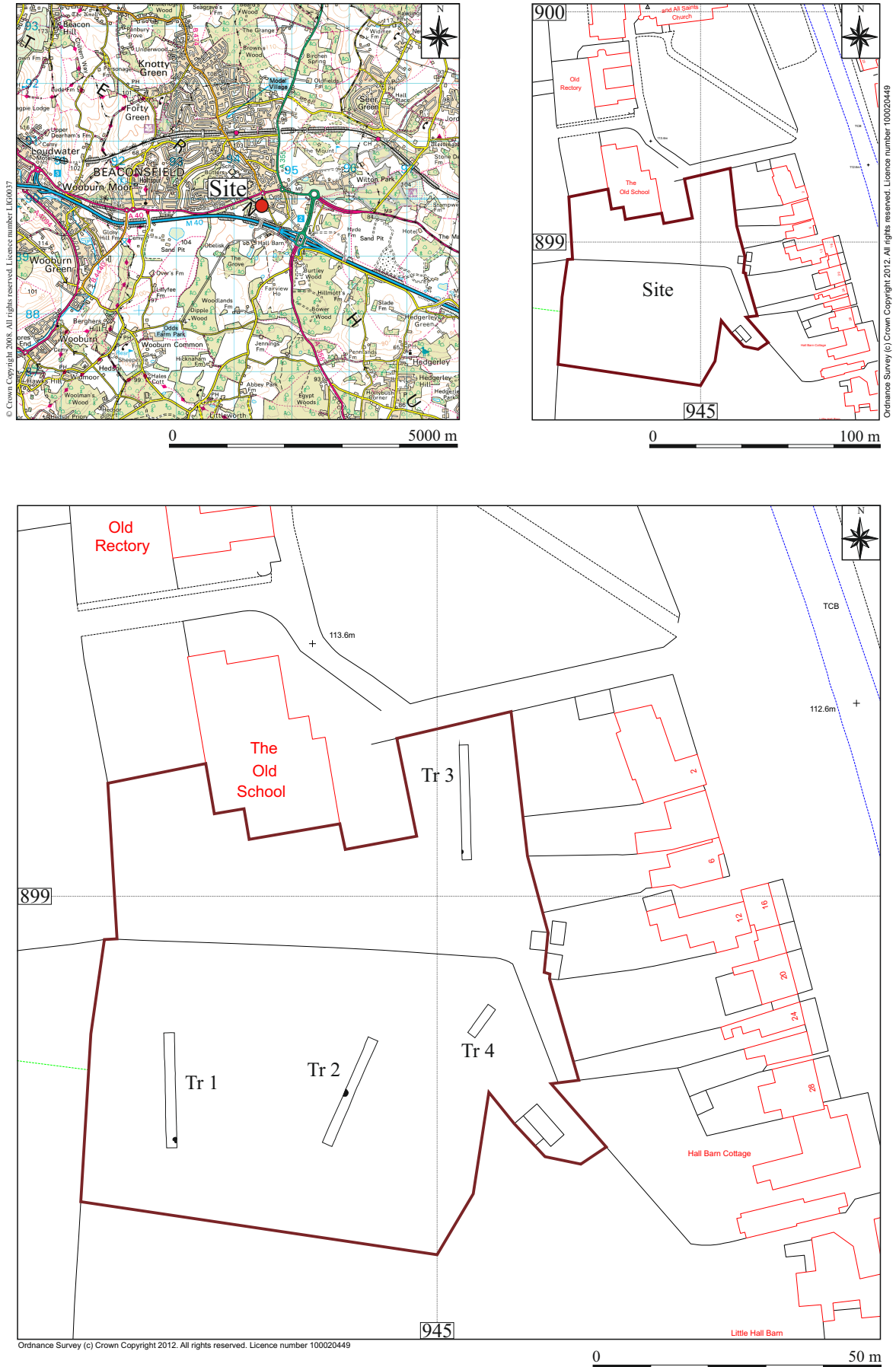


Figure 1. Site location

- 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.

In particular:

- To identify and characterise any evidence evidence for medieval occupation or activity.
- To establish whether there is any evidence for understanding the medieval and early post-medieval settlement morphology

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* designed by JMHS and agreed with Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Services, JMHS carried out the work, which comprised the excavation of four trenches across the site.

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 for Archaeologists (2008).

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of two trenches across the site by a 3-tonne excavator equipped with a ditching bucket, supplemented by limited hand investigation of archaeological deposits. Three trenches were 20m long the fourth was 6m long (due to trees in the area), all were 1.6m wide (Fig. 1).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field Results (Figure 2)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

A similar sequence was seen within all trenches. The lowest deposit revealed was a geological layer consisting of a mixed glacial sands and gravel (1/03, 2/03, 3/03 and 4/03) related to the River Terrace Deposits of the pre-diversionary, ancestral River Thames (BGS 255).

Above this was a 0.1m thick layer of orange-brown clay-sand and gravel (1/02, 2/02, 3/02 and 4/02). This is likely to also be a natural layer. The uppermost layer was a

garden soil or topsoil of mid grey-brown sandy loam (1/01, 2/01, 3/01 and 4/01) that was up to 0.4m thick

Trench 1

Cut into the natural (1/02) were two small pits 1/04 and 1/06. These were sealed by layer (1/01)

Context	Description	Dimensions	Fill
1/04	Sub-circular cut	0.6m x 0.5m	Mid grey-brown clay-sand (1/05) 0.14m thick
1/06	Sub-circular cut	0.3m x 0.35m	Mid grey-brown clay-sand (1/07) 0.1m thick

Both pits contained fragments of coal and were interpreted as grubbed out planting pits.

Trench 2

Cut into layer (2/02) was a small pit 2/04 that was sealed by the topsoil (2/01).

Context	Description	Dimensions	Fill
2/04	Sub-circular cut	0.7m x 1.1m	Mid orange brown clay-sand (2/05) 0.13m thick

It contained sherds of modern red earthenware flowerpot.

Trench 3

Cut into layer (3/02) was a 18th century or later *French drain* a large planting pit of a tree the fill of which still contained the decaying root material, and a red brick built post-medieval well 3/04. This well had been capped, however a water pipe was seen within it suggesting that at some point it had been associated with a pump.

Trench 4

This trench contained no archaeological features

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place during good weather conditions. The percentage size of the sample was considered sufficient for the development area.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

The material was assessed on site and not retained; it was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

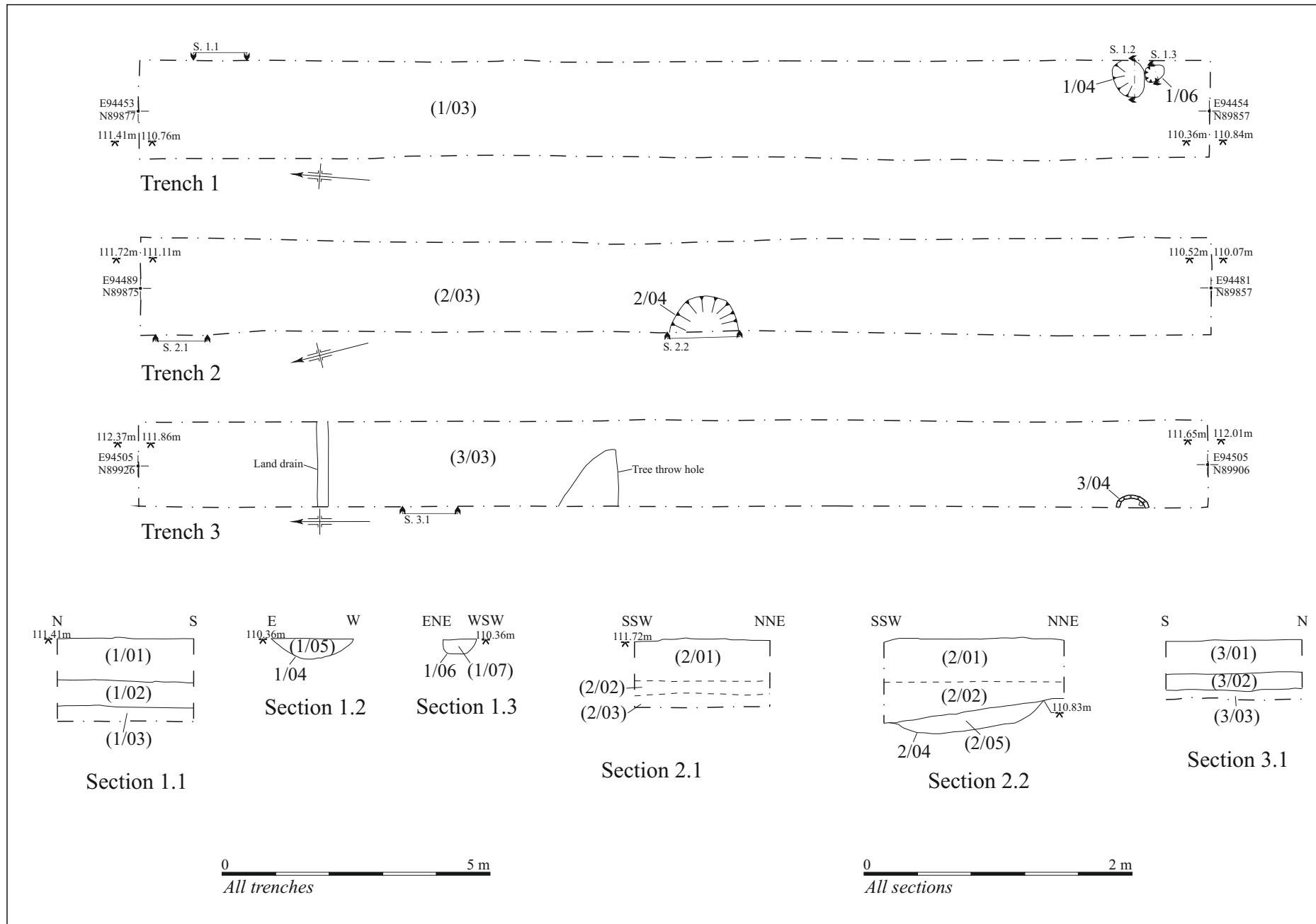


Figure 2. Plans and sections

Red earthenware (PM8) Late 16th –19th century
– present in contexts (2/05), (3/01) & (4/01)

White Earthenware (PM25) Late 18th – 20th century
– present in contexts (1/01) & (3/01)

Salt-glazed Stoneware (PM22) 18th century
– present in the fill of the *French Drain*

5.2 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken as the potential of the deposits was not felt to be sufficient to warrant sampling.

6 DISCUSSION

Although situated within the historic core of the town, close to the church and the site of a 14th century nunnery no finds of a medieval date were recovered and the site would appear to have been kept as an open space. Such occurrences are not uncommon in the medieval period and have been seen at a number of towns (Gilbert 2011; Oram & Blinkorn 2012)

The well is not marked on the 1:2,500 OS maps of 1875, 1899 or 1924, however a pump is marked close by to the east on the 1899 map and is probably associated.

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