

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT
AT THE FORMER EAST BERKSHIRE COLLEGE,
BOYN HILL ROAD, MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE**

NGR SU 877 807

On behalf of

CgMs Consulting

OCTOBER 2012

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation comprising three trenches on land at the former East Berkshire College, Boyn Hill Road, Maidenhead where no archaeological remains were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The application area is located on the south side of Boyn Hill Road, Maidenhead (NGR SU 6078 8174). It lies at approximately 49m above OD and the underlying geology is Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation overlain by Boyn Hill gravel.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission was granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (application ref: 11/02156) for the demolition of all existing buildings, with the exception of Boyn Hill House and associated store building and part boundary wall, and redevelopment to provide 66 new residential dwellings, across private and affordable tenures, including the conversion of Boyn Hill House into 3 residential dwellings

A *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation*, which proposed a suitable methodology to satisfy the requirements of the Brief, was prepared by CgMs Consulting and accepted by Berkshire Archaeology.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The desk based assessment established that the site had moderate potential for Palaeolithic and Roman remains and low potential for all other archaeological periods (Bourne 2012).

In the DBA it was argued that the existing and previous development has resulted in extensive and relatively deep ground disturbance across most of the site. Site investigations established that there was up to 1.2m of modern made ground present within the footprint of the former college buildings on the eastern part of the site. There was up to 1.5m of modern made ground beneath the existing car park. The construction of the existing derelict college buildings would have resulted in similar, if not deeper due to the height of the main building, level of below ground disturbance. Therefore, any archaeological deposits formerly located within the majority of the site would have been destroyed as the ground disturbance occurred to below levels at which archaeological features would have occurred.

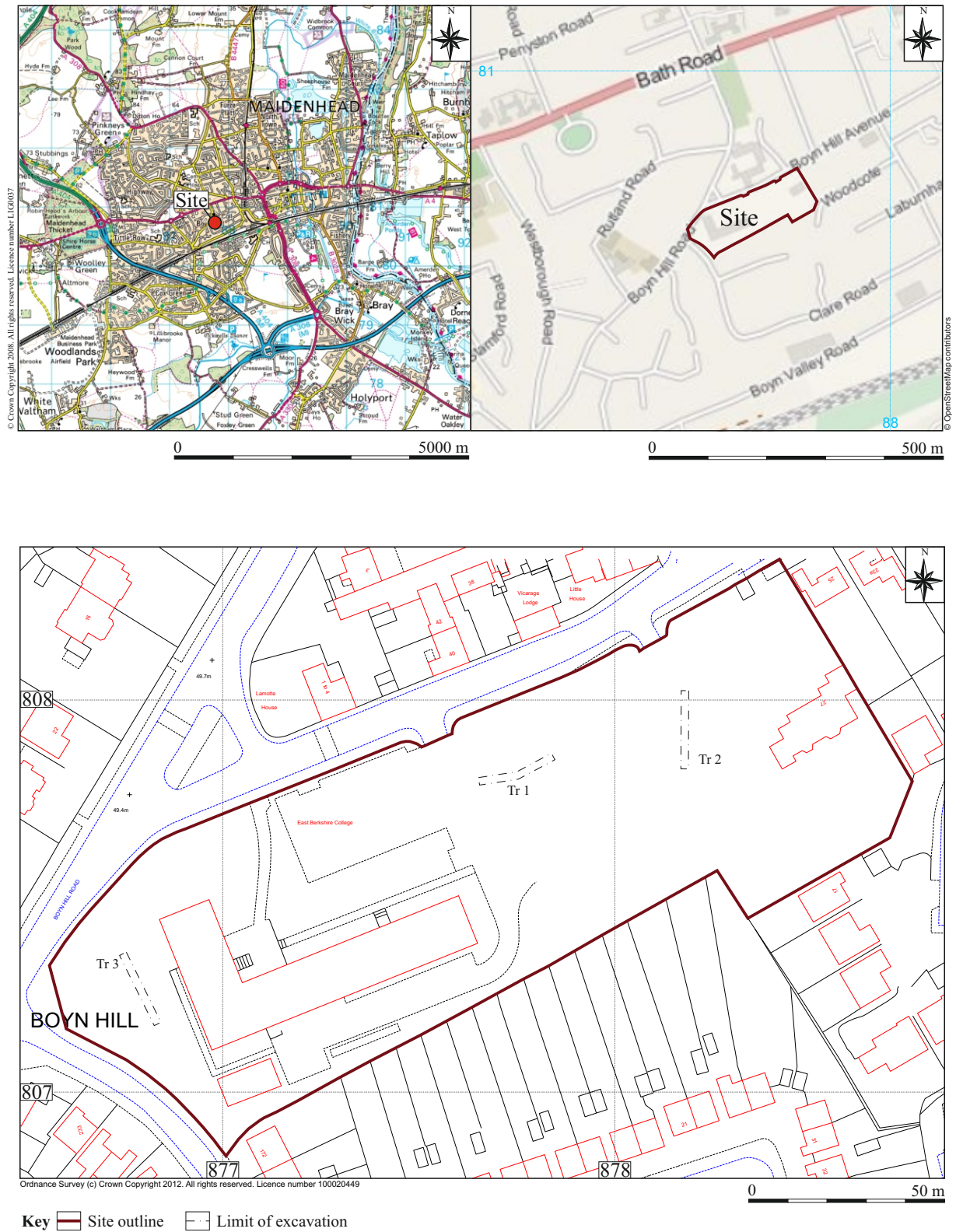


Figure 1. Site location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation* were as follows:

- To determine the existence or absence of any archaeological remains; and should remains be found to be present to ensure their preservation in situ (where nationally important remains are identified) or preservation by record, through excavation, to the highest possible standard – any decisions made regarding preservation in situ (where nationally important remains are identified) will be by agreement through consultation with Berkshire Archaeology and English Heritage (if appropriate) with the view to considering current and on-going impacts as outlined in 4.2.8, 4.2.9 and 4.2.10
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of the remains
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains
- 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, as far as is possible, 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 determine the potential of the site to provide palaeo-environmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

The aims of the project can be summarised as follows:

- o To determine if Palaeolithic and Roman remains identified in the wider study area are present within the site
- o To inform the design of suitable mitigation measures and the production of a written scheme of investigation for excavation if archaeology is identified or the production of a mitigation strategy for preservation in situ where remains are found that are nationally important.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to with Berkshire Archaeology a *Specification* was prepared by CgMs Consulting and agreed with Berkshire Archaeology. John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work according to the *Specification*.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Specification*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The investigation formed a first stage in a potential programme of investigations. It involved the mechanical excavation of three 20m long trenches 1.8m wide, supplemented by limited hand investigation of archaeological deposits. Excavation of the trenches was carried out by a 7.5 tonne excavator with a toothless bucket under archaeological control (Fig. 1).

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers indicate features i.e. cuts that were investigated during the evaluation; while numbers in parentheses - () - show feature fills or deposits of material, some of which were investigated, while others were characterised by analogy with previously excavated deposits. All measurements are given in metres. A general description of the features and fills, or deposits, observed is given in the Appendix Context Description at the rear of the report.

4.1 Fieldwork (*Figures 1-3*)

Three trenches were excavated. The sequence was the same in all. Boyn Hill Gravel, or Fifth Terrace, natural gravels (1/2), (2/3), (3/3) was revealed in all trenches. In Trenches 1 and 2 extensive modern service runs and footings had truncated the gravel.

In Trench 2 there was a thin layer of brown silty sand loam (2/2), a former cultivation soil, which extended approximately 2m from the north end of the trench, up to 0.1m thick; late 19th- or early 20th-century brick (not retained) was present in the deposit. In Trench 3 this layer was encountered as a redeposited layer (3/2) in which a small quantity of poorly preserved architectural ceramics (not retained) were present. These would appear to be remains from Cliefden Cottage or Redriff, seen on the 1876 and 1899 OS maps. This deposit extended from the base of the topsoil (3/1) to the gravel (3/3), a depth of *c* 1.1m, and did not include any *in situ* cultivation soil.

In Trench 1 the gravel (1/2) was overlain by demolition and redeposited topsoil (1/1) up to 0.3m thick; in Trench 2 the cultivation soil (2/2) and gravel (2/3) was overlain by hardcore (2/1) for access up to 0.2m thick; and in Trench 3 the redeposited



Trench 1; overview looking east



Trench 2; overview looking south



Trench 3; overview looking south

Figure 2. Trench photographs

cultivation soil (3/2) was sealed with topsoil (3/1) approximately 0.15m thick.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The evaluation took place during clement conditions on October 16th.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

No finds, other than the brick and architectural ceramics mentioned above, were recovered during the evaluation.

No palaeoenvironmental samples were taken, as the potential was not felt to be sufficient.

6 DISCUSSION

The site had clearly been reduced to the natural gravels prior to the present landowner taking possession. This ground reduction was associated with the construction of the East Berkshire College buildings. Evidence for the previous buildings, such as Cliefden Cottage or Redriff, was not apparent, apart from as residual material in the material from the ground-reduction, which had been used for landscaping on the west side of the site, over 1m deep, as seen in Trench 3. Elsewhere, the trenches demonstrated that the site had been heavily impacted upon by services associated with the former use as the East Berkshire College. The gravel did not reveal any indication of Roman or prehistoric activity.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bourn, R., 2012 *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment Former East Berkshire College Boyn Hill Road Maidenhead* Unpublished client report RB/14217

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Ctx	Type	Description	L (m)	B (m)	D (m)	Finds/ Date	Interpretation
Trench 1							
1/1	Layer	Grey brown silt & freq gravel	>30	>1.6	0.21	-	Topsoil
1/2	Layer	Grey white chalk	>30	>1.6	0.06	-	Broken natural
1/3	Layer	White chalk	>10	>1.6	Unk.	-	Natural
Trench 2							
2/1	Layer	Grey brown silt & freq gravel	>30	>1.6	0.08	-	Topsoil
2/2	Layer	Grey white chalk	>30	>1.6	0.16	-	Broken natural
2/3	Layer	White chalk	>30	>1.6	Unk.	-	Natural
Trench 3							
2/1	Layer	Grey brown silt & freq gravel	>20.5	>1.6	0.12	-	Topsoil
2/2	Layer	Grey white chalk	>20.5	>1.6	0.1	-	Broken natural
2/3	Layer	White chalk	>20.5	>1.6	Unk.	-	Natural
Trench 4							
2/1	Layer	Grey brown silt & freq gravel	>12.7	>1.6	0.1	-	Topsoil
2/2	Layer	Grey white chalk	4.5	>1.6	0.2	-	Broken natural
2/3	Layer	White chalk	>12.5	>1.6	Unk.	-	Natural