

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT  
WINTERHILL FARM, WINTER HILL,  
COOKHAM, BERKSHIRE**

**(NGR SU 8757 8625)**

*On behalf of*

*Hilro Consulting Ltd*

**MARCH 2015**

**REPORT FOR** Hilro Consulting Ltd  
The Barn  
Yewden Farm  
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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on behalf of Hilro Consulting Ltd as a condition of planning permission for the erection of livestock building and associated hard-standing at Winterhill Farm House, Winter Hill, Cookham SL6 9TW. The work was carried on the 24th of February 2015. The evaluation comprised a single L shaped trench, totalling 25m, placed within the footprint of the proposed livestock building. The evaluation did not identify any significant archaeological features or deposits. The evaluation identified a possible ploughsoil of indeterminate date overlaying the geological horizon.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location and Geology (Fig.1)**

The site is located at Winterhill Farm House, Winter Hill, Cookham, Maidenhead (NGR SU 8757 8625). Currently the land is agricultural and the underlying geology is Pebble Gravel and dry valley deposits (Institute of Geological Sciences, Mineral Assessment Report No 42).

### **1.2 Planning Background**

The Royal Borough of Maidenhead and Windsor has granted permission for the erection of a livestock building and associated hard standing at Winterhill Farm House Winter Hill Cookham Maidenhead SL6 9TW (14/03483). Berkshire Archaeology has been consulted regarding this development and has advised that a programme of archaeological work is required. The first stage of which is a preliminary archaeological evaluation in the area. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced, and approved by Berkshire Archaeology, which outlined the method by which the archaeological work would be carried out in order to identify whether any archaeological remains existed on the proposal site.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

Land in Cookham is mentioned in the will of the ealdorman Aelfheah (965–75) when he bequeathed his estate here to 'his royal lord.' From this time Cookham seems to have become a royal estate, and a 'witan' was held here by Ethelred II. At the Conquest Cookham belonged to the Crown, and in 1086 was assessed at 20 hides and contained woodland for a hundred swine. The manor formed part of the dowry of the Queens of England from the reign of Edward I, who assigned the manor in 1281 to his mother Eleanor, until the end of the reign of Henry VIII (VCH 1923).

Very faint traces of three or four ditches visible as cropmarks are close to the development site. These are in an area of 'spots' of possible tree root holes. The ditches form no clear pattern, but may form an enclosure (HER 00536.01.000). A linear cropmark appears to extend towards the area of the proposed development; this feature may well be a recent field boundary ditch although a cropmark of a penannular enclosure is noted roughly 200m to the east. Further linear cropmarks are seen 500m to the east (Gates 1975). A chalk or gravel pit was located roughly 200m

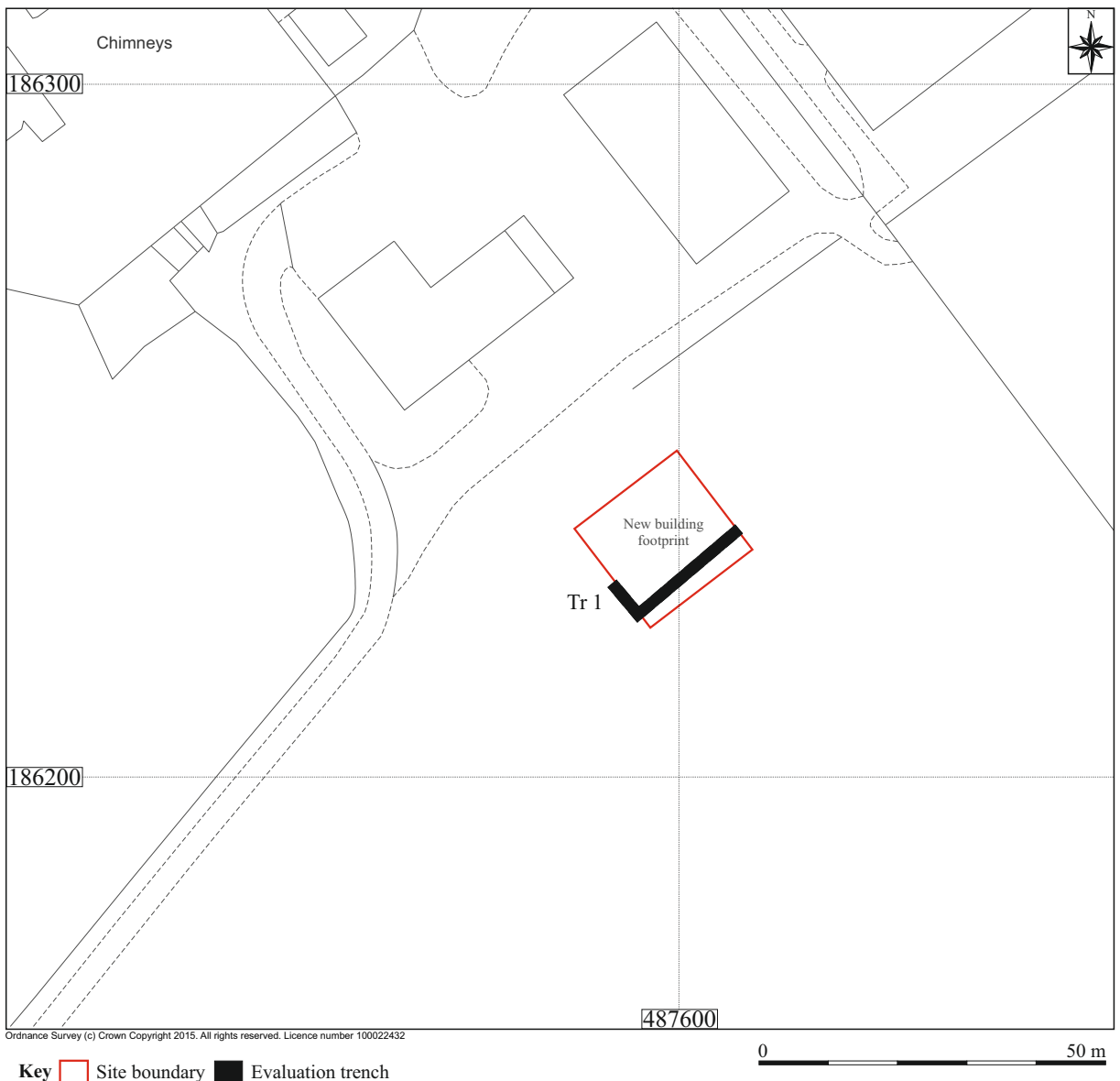
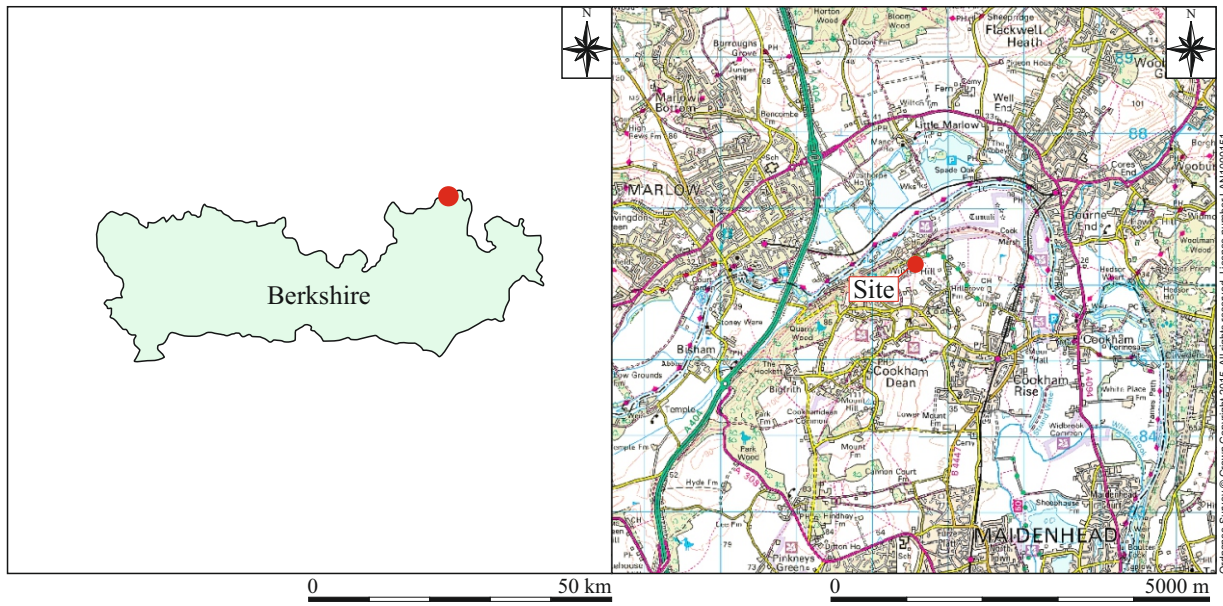


Figure 1: Site location

away at Round Coppice to the south of the development area that contained flint and animal bone, it was excavated in 1907 (HER 00503.01.000).

The ditches close to the site may be recent boundary ditches seen on the 6" to 1 mile OS maps of 1882, 1900 and 1914. These had disappeared and the boundaries altered by the publication of the 1926 OS map. The 1882 map shows a line of trees in the area that may account for the 'spots' on the cropmarks previously mentioned.

## **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/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within those areas affected.
- to produce an evaluation report presenting a digest of information on the character and significance of the deposits under review and to form the basis of any proposals for appropriate further action.
- the evaluation should also aim to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with The Royal Borough of Maidenhead and Windsor's Archaeological Adviser (Berkshire Archaeology).

### **3.2 Methodology**

A trenching sample equivalent to one 25m x 1.6m trench (Trench 1) was excavated within the footprint of the proposed livestock building. The trench was repositioned to avoid a recently formed soil bund associated with construction of the current farm buildings.

John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Field Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014).

## 4 RESULTS

All features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material. Context numbers without brackets refer to cuts.

### 4.1 Trench 1 (Figure 2)

The geological horizon (1/02 and 1/03) was encountered at a general depth of 0.3m (71.98m OD, NE end, 70.36m OD SW end) and consisted of loose pebble gravel (1/02) to the north-east of the trench, sharply changing to moderately compact mid brown silt towards the south-west end of the trench.

The geological horizon (1/02, 1/03) was overlain by a deposit (1/01) of loose, mid grey silty sand with 60% poorly sorted sub angular flint gravels, generally 0.26m thick.

Layer (1/01) was cut by two land-drains, generally filled with re-deposited geology. Modern brick and tile was noted within these features. No finds were noted from deposit (1/01) although it is likely to represent a ploughed soil of post-medieval/modern date.

Sealing the land-drains and overlaying (1/01) was the current turf and topsoil (1/04), 0.12m thick.



Trench 1. View to north-east.



## 5 FINDS

No finds were recovered during the course of the evaluation. Modern brick and tile was noted within both land-drains although not retained.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation did not identify any significant archaeological deposits or features. The ploughsoil (1/01) is likely to be post medieval or modern in date but is of little archaeological interest. The results are likely to be indicative of the building footprint.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*.

John Moore heritage Services, 2015, *Written Scheme of Investigation (Project No 3211)*.

P. N. Dunkley, Institute of Geological Sciences, *Mineral Assessment Report No 42*.

## Appendix A

Context Table

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>								
<b>Summary- Length: 14m. Average depth: 1.2m. Aligned: E-W.</b>								
1/01	Layer	Layer					Ploughsoil	
1/02	Layer	Geology					Gravel	
1/03	Layer	Geology					Dry valley silt	
1/04	Layer						Turf and topsoil.	