

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

LAND ADJACENT TO CHARLECOMBE HOUSE,

23 RECTORY ROAD,

WOKINGHAM.

BERKSHIRE

SU 8129 6890

On behalf of

Mr N M Marshall

OCTOBER 2003

REPORT FOR

Mr N M Marshall

PREPARED BY

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FIELDWORK

2 October 2003

REPORT ISSUED

17 October 2003

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Summary

A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services on 2nd October 2003 during the excavation of foundation trenches for a new dwelling on this site. This trenching revealed natural sand at about 260mm below present ground level. Above this was topsoil consisting of sandy silt containing occasional charcoal flecks. A modern north west- south east orientated ditch was revealed suggesting a probable realignment of property boundaries during recent times.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located on land adjacent to 23 Charlecombe House, Rectory Road, Wokingham (NGR SU 8129 6890). The site is bounded by Rectory Road to the north and by properties on the other three sides. The underlying geology is Bagshot Beds and the site lies at approximately 68.9m above Ordnance Datum.

1.2 Planning Background

Wokingham District Council granted planning permission for the construction of a detached dwelling with garage (F/2003/9223). Due to the potential presence of below ground archaeological deposits a condition was attached that required the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during the course of the groundworks in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains of significance. Babbie Group, on behalf of Wokingham District Council, has prepared a *Brief* for the work. John Moore Heritage Services (henceforth JMHS) prepared a *Written Scheme of Investigation* outlining a methodology that would satisfy the requirements of the *Brief*.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site lies behind the early township of Wokingham. It is possible that parts of the early town spread out as far as Rectory Road and therefore the proposed construction may have disturbed archaeological remains associated with earlier uses and buildings on the site.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

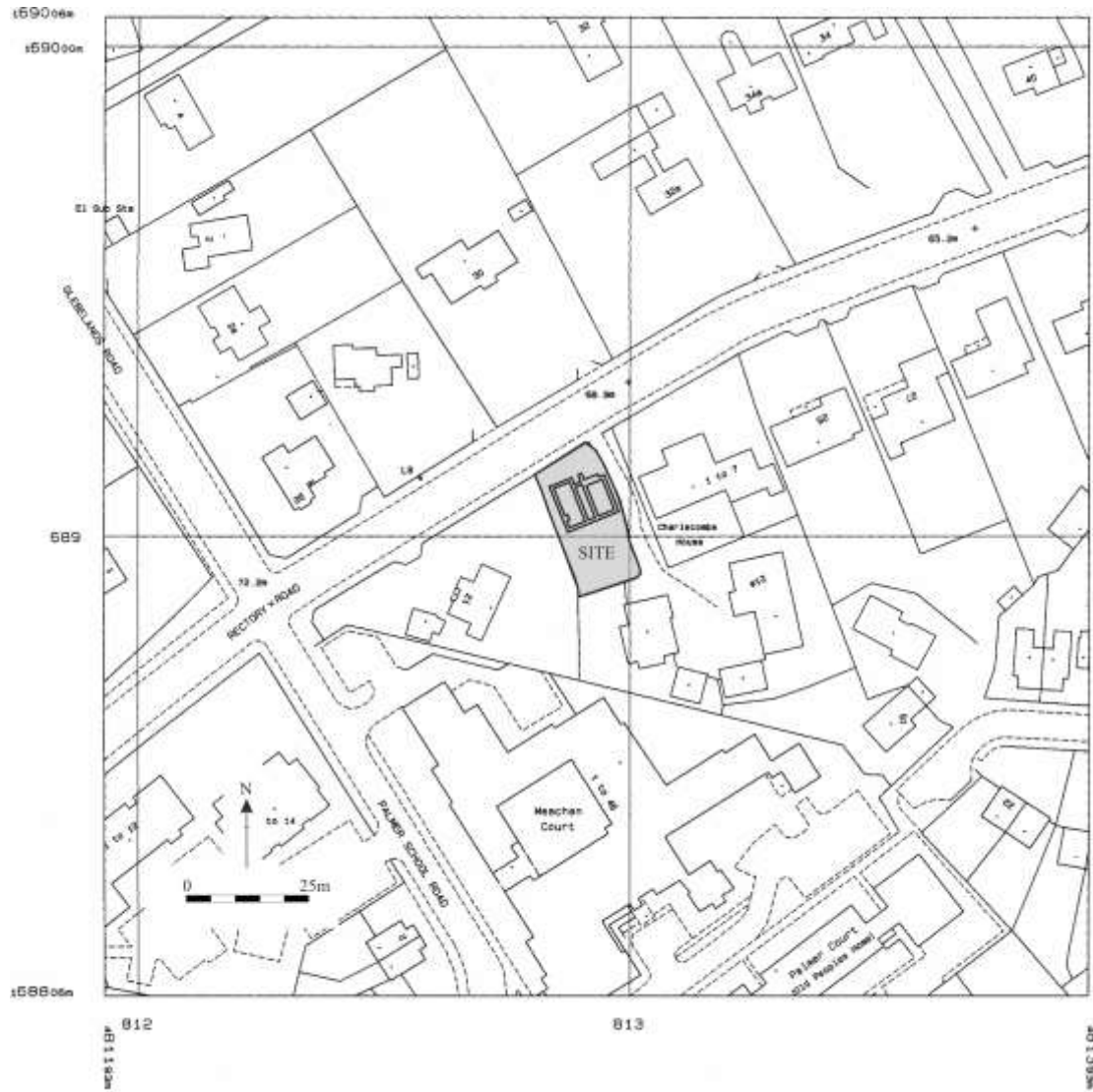


Figure 1. Site and new build location.

Scale 1:1250

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.
- To determine whether any remains associated with the early township of Wokingham were present.
- The results of the investigations will be made public.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* issued by Babtie Group, a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and subsequently agreed with Babtie Group and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the monitoring of intrusive groundworks associated with the excavation of the foundation trenches.

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 of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

A site presence was maintained throughout the duration of the excavation of all the property's foundation trenches, although the garage foundations were not observed. The excavation of the foundation trenches to a depth between 0.96m and 1.2m was undertaken using a 600mm toothed bucket. Spoil was scanned for artefact retrieval and all exposed sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features.

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

4 RESULTS

The lowest recorded deposit comprised orange yellow sand (02). This constituted the natural geology of the site and was seen to be *c.* 260mm below the present ground level. A 260mm thick layer of topsoil (01) consisting of brown sandy silt containing 5% small sub-rounded stones, occasional flecks of charcoal and ceramic building material sealed the sand.

Cut into the top of the sand (02) was a ditch orientated north west – south east. The ditch fill consisted of mid-brown sandy silt containing occasional small sub-rounded stones, charcoal flecks and 1% fine gravel. Two sherds of 19/20th century pottery along with tile and plastic were retrieved from the fill.

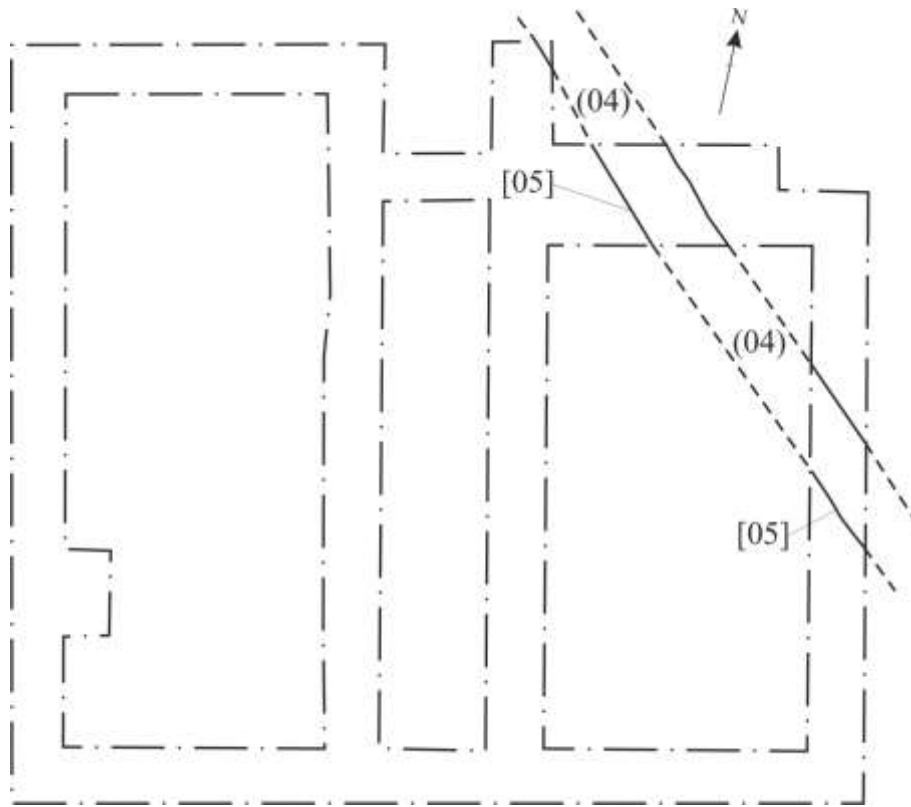


Figure 2. Area of Excavation.

The ditch cut [05] was approximately 650mm deep, 950mm wide at the top narrowing to 450mm wide at the flat base.

5 FINDS

No finds other than 19/20th century pottery, tile and plastic were seen during the course of the fieldwork. Nothing was retained.

6 DISCUSSION

The only feature seen was a ditch, which has been in use in the 20th century. The orientation is not perpendicular to Rectory road and is not in the same orientation as any other borders in the area. The ditch must pre-date the development of this part of Wokingham.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Babtie Group, 2003. *23 Charlecombe House, Land adj. Rectory Road, Wokingham: Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief.*

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