

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

NORRIS HOUSE, BOYNE HILL AVENUE,

MAIDENHEAD,

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

SU 8804 8105

On behalf of

Francis Construction Ltd.

JUNE 2003

REPORT FOR Francis Construction Ltd.
Armour House
Colthrop Lane
Thatcham
Berkshire RG19 4PD

PREPARED BY Mick Parsons

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ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Long White Cloud
Waterperry Road
Holton
Oxfordshire
O33 1PW

Telephone/Fax: 01865 876637

E-mail: jmhs99@hotmail.com

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Summary

An evaluation of this site was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services in June 2003. Three trenches each measuring 30.00m x 1.65m and one trench measuring 22.00m x 1.65 (in total a 10% sample) were excavated across the proposed development area. The site was found to be a former quarry.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site of the proposed development is located at Norris House on the north side of Boyn Hill Avenue (NGR SU 8804 8105). The underlying geology is gravel terrace overlaying Upper Chalk. The site lies at approximately 48.40m OD. The previous buildings on the site had been removed recently.

1.2 Planning Background

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has granted planning permission for the development of the above site and build 29 care flats for the elderly and communal facilities. Due to the archaeological potential of the site Babcie Environmental advised the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken and had prepared a Brief for such an evaluation. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* was subsequently prepared in response to this document by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS).

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is approx 100m to the south of a possible Roman building discovered in 1886 (SMR 00579.00.100 – RW 930) and approx 100m to the west of recently discovered (1987) remains of another possible Roman building (SMR 00579.07.101 – RW 943). There are also references to finds including an earthenware loom-weight found within a gravel pit on Boyn Hill, (Peake 1931).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To determine or confirm the general state of any remains present.
- To determine the approximate date or date range of any remains by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- To determine the approximate extent of any remains within the application area.
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains.

- To determine the complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- To determine the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present.
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* issued by Babtie a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of a total of four trenches across the site (Fig. 1).

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

The trenching sample of 10% of the total area specified within the brief was achieved through the excavation of three 30.0m long trenches and one 22.0m trench. All trenches were 1.60 m wide and were excavated by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand prior to limited hand excavation of any identified archaeological deposits

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. A photographic record was produced. The trenches were backfilled after recording.

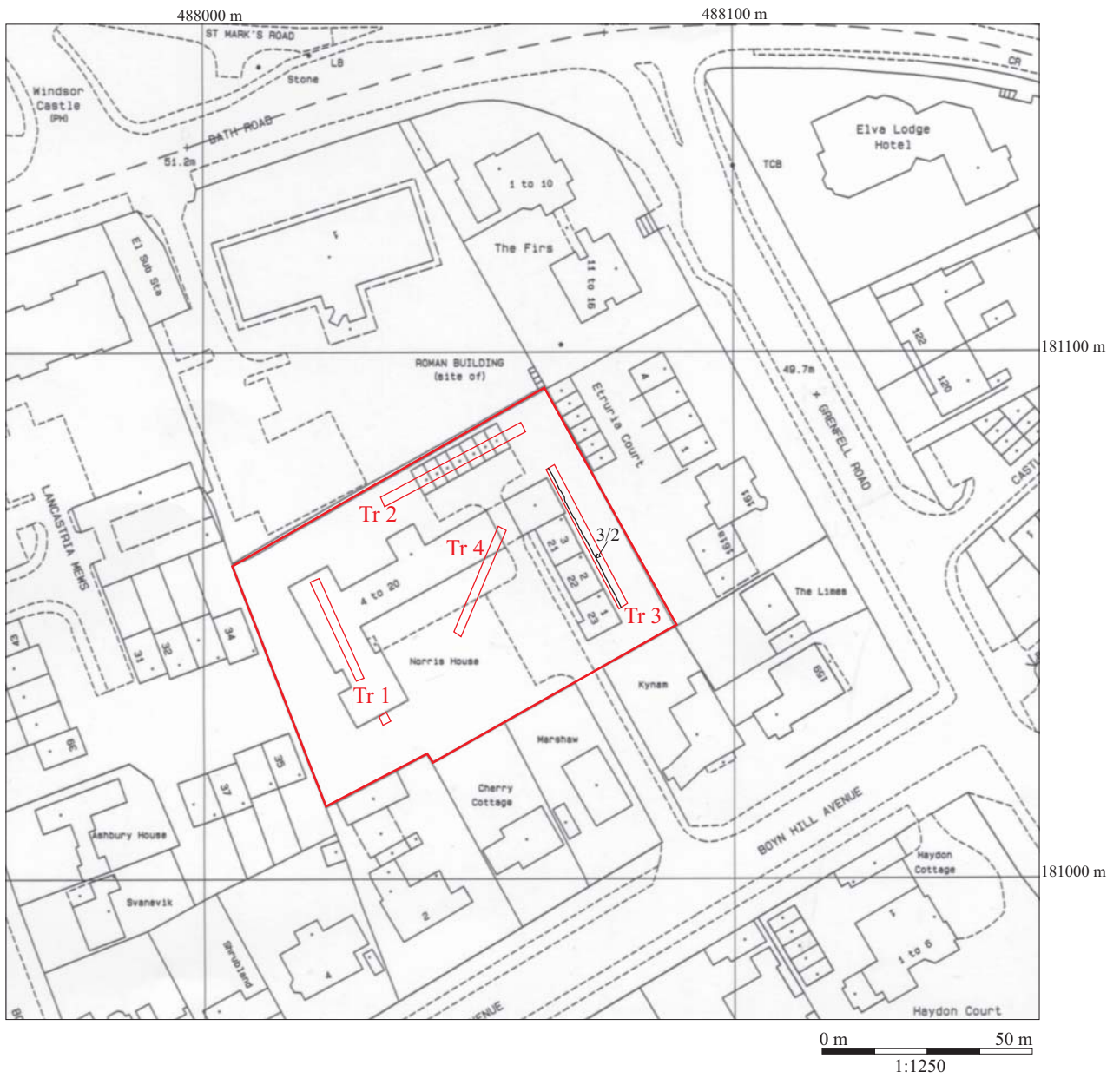


Fig 1: Site and Trench Locations

4 RESULTS

The site had recently been “grubbed out”. Demolition of existing buildings and footings resulted in the top 0.60 – 0.80m of soils being mixed up with quarry in-fill and building rubble.

The lowest recorded deposit in all trenches comprised mixed orange to brown sand and gravels. This constituted the natural geology of the site.

Trench 1

What was thought originally to be a possible cut feature [1/05] aligned roughly N/S was encountered within this trench. Its full extent was not visible within the confines of the trench. The anomaly was filled with westward slumping deposits of clean gravels and silt (1/02) (1/03) (1/04). This has been interpreted as part of the quarry infilling where the quarrying had been deeper and had survived the recent site clearance. Undisturbed natural was encountered at a depth of 48.17m OD (0.75m below existing ground surface).

Trench 2

No archaeological features were encountered within this trench. Deposits of natural gravels and sands (2/02, 2/03, 2/04, (2/05) were seen below the disturbed modern levels. Undisturbed natural was encountered at a depth of 48.06m OD.

Trench 3

Undisturbed natural (3/08) was encountered at a depth of 47.96m OD (0.5m below existing ground level) on the east side of the trench. Within the top of the natural was a tree-throw pit [3/05]. Above the natural were traces of the former topsoil (3/09), which in turn was overlain by material derived from the site clearance (3/03). This in turn was cut by a large disturbance (3/02) caused by the removal of the rear foundations of the previous range of buildings on the east side of the site. No other archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 4

No archaeological features were encountered within this trench. Deposits of natural gravels and sands (4/1-5) were seen below the disturbed modern levels. Undisturbed natural was encountered at a depth of 48.30m OD.

5 FINDS

No finds were seen during the course of the fieldwork, other than modern demolition materials, which were not retained.

6 DISCUSSION

The main area of the site lies within a visible hollow, which is up to 2.0m lower than the existing ground level of the surrounding properties. Remains of the bottom of the quarry deposits were mixed into the site clearance material except for part of Trench 1 where the quarrying had been deeper.

The excavation of these four trenches has provided definitive evidence supporting the theory that the site had been quarried and that no archaeological remains are present. The loomweight (Peake, 1931) may well have derived from this site

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Peake, H. 1931, *The Archaeology of Berkshire*, p. 96. London.

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

APPENDIX 1 – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
Trench 1			1.2	1.65	30		
1	Layer	Made Ground	0.66	Tr.	Tr.		Modern
2	Fill	Fill of Quarry	0.20-0.25	0.45			
3	Fill	Fill of Quarry	0.18	0.7			
4	Fill	Fill of Quarry	0.04	0.7			
5	Cut	Quarry					
6	Deposit	Natural					
7	Deposit	Natural					
Trench 2			1.25	1.65	30		
1	Layer	Made Ground	0.65	Tr			Modern
2	Deposit	Natural	0.08	3.1			
3	Edge	Natural	0.08	3.1			
4	Deposit	Natural					
5	Deposit	Natural					
Trench 3			0.85	1.65	30		
1	Layer	Fill of 2	0.85	Tr			Modern
2	Cut	Removal of foundations	0.85+	Tr			Modern
3	Layer	Made ground	0.45	Tr	0.7		Modern
4	Fill	Fill of 5	0.23	0.4			
5	Cut	Tree Throw	0.23	2.2	1.2		
6	Fill	Fill of 7	0.08	0.3	0.5		
7	Cut	Rooting	0.08	0.3	0.5		
8	Deposit	Natural					
9	Layer	Topsoil	0.23	0.7	15		Modern
Trench 4			1.2	1.65	22		
1	Layer	Made Ground	0.9	Tr			Modern
2	Deposit	Natural	0.25				
3	Deposit	Natural					
4	Deposit	Natural					
5	Deposit	Natural					

Tr. = trench