



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

**LAMB'S FARM BUSINESS PARK,
SWALLOWFIELD, BERKS.**

SU 7160 6550

On behalf of

JP Winkworth Ltd

MAY 2007

REPORT FOR

JP Winkworth Ltd
Willow Tree Works
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Summary

A Watching Brief was carried out on 1st May 2007 by John Moore Heritage Services on the excavation of footings for a new commercial unit at Lamb's Farm Business Park, Swallowfield, Berkshire. 20th century dumps of building rubbish and other waste were observed. No archaeological remains were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the eastern edge of Lamb's Farm Business Park, between Swallowfield and Spencer's Wood just off the B3349 Basingstoke Road. The site is centred on NGR SU 7160 6550. The site is located on Barton Beds gravel at c. 56m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

Wokingham District Council granted planning permission to Sigma Planning Services on behalf of JP Winkworth Ltd to erect new warehousing on the edge of existing hardstanding (F/2006/7760). A condition was attached requiring the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks. Berkshire Archaeology, on behalf of Wokingham District Council, prepared a *Brief* for the work. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* submitted by John Moore Heritage Services detailed how the requirements of the *Brief* would be met.

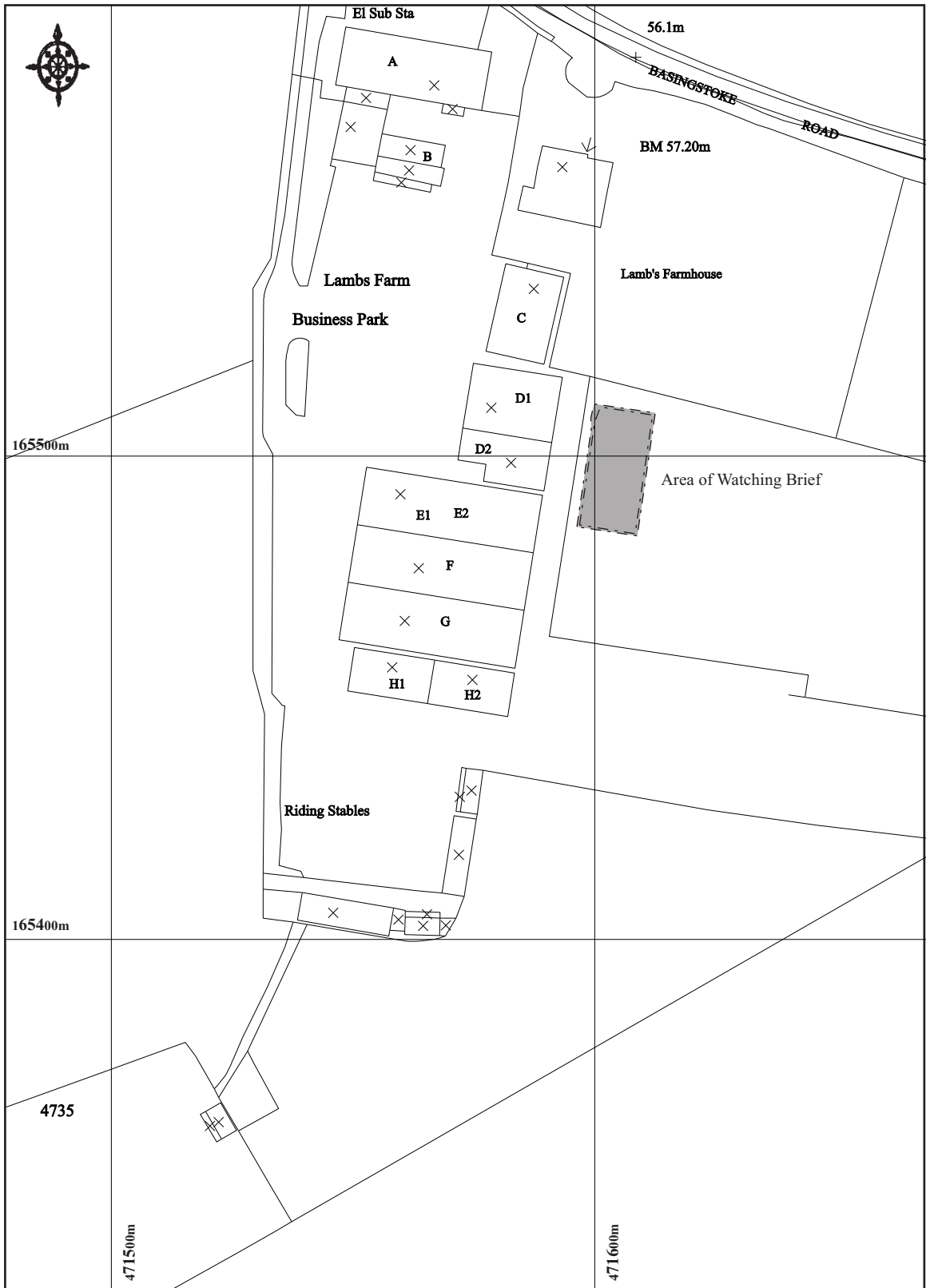
1.3 Archaeological Background

The site lies close to the north of a number of cropmarks, which may indicate a possible Deserted Medieval Settlement (SMR 1108). To the north-east of the site (c. 330m), are additional cropmarks denoting possible prehistoric inhabitation as well as Sheepbridge Court manorial complex (SAM 12020), located approximately 490m to the east. A large quantity of medieval pottery (including SMR 6426) has also been found close to the site. In addition, flints from the period of the Mesolithic to Bronze Age have been found to the north-east (SMR 6031) while further lithic finds were made further north during the Lodden Valley Survey. A single sherd of Roman pottery is known from 200m to the north-east (SMR 6245).

The Devil's Highway (Silchester to London Roman Road) is also located approximately 2.5 km to the south of the site. Roman activity may also be indicated in the area but at present there is little evidence for this.

A watching brief carried out by John More Heritage Services (JMHS, 2004) to the south of the current application during the course of the excavation of footings for an office building at Lambs Farm recorded no archaeological deposits or finds, although this was located over the footprint of a previously demolished building.

The above information on the archaeological background has been provided by Berkshire Archaeology.



2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* 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 by record to the highest possible standard.
- 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 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 palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

The results of the investigations will be made public.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Berkshire Archaeology. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record throughout, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was on site on 1st May 2007 to monitor the excavation of the footings by a 13-tonne 360° excavator using a 600mm bucket. The north, west and south footings were monitored and in agreement with the Archaeological Officer at

Berkshire Archaeology, it was decided that the east footing need not be monitored as it was apparent that no archaeology was present on site.

4 RESULTS

All archaeological features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered both the feature cut and fill, unless the feature was sample excavated by hand. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. A general description of the feature fills is given. CBM is used as an abbreviation for ceramic building materials, such as tile and brick.

The earliest deposit observed was a layer (4) of Barton Beds gravel. No finds were recovered from the gravel. This deposit was overlain by a peaty deposit (3), which subsequent machining revealed to be one of several pockets of organic material dumped onto the site during the latter part of the 20th century. This was in turn overlain by a clay deposit (2) containing asbestos sheeting, corrugated iron, plastic, iron and ceramic pipes, car parts and further pockets of organic material. Layers (2) and (3) can be conflated as a single dump, which extends over the entire area of the proposed building to a depth of c. 1.4m - 2m. The building waste was sealed by c. 0.3m of hardcore (1).

5 DISCUSSION

Excavation of the footings carried out in 2007 concurs with evidence from the watching brief carried out by John Moore Heritage Services in June 2004. Building waste and general tipping of rubbish was observed during both watching briefs to overlie the natural Barton Beds gravel. It seems that in the latter part of the 20th century much of the area of the current business park had been reduced to the level of the natural gravel and subsequently used as a private tip. Anecdotal evidence from Mr D Montague, the contracted builder, confirmed that building waste had been observed beneath the present access road to Lamb's Farm Business Park as well as in the field to the east of the new unit. In conclusion, no archaeological evidence linking the site to the known archaeology in the vicinity was observed due to severe truncation of the site.

6 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

The project brief

Written Scheme of Investigation

The project report

The primary site records

The archive has been given an accession number REDMG: 2007: 206 by Reading Museum, where it will be deposited.

7 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

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