



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**WILLOW DENE, THE FRIARY,**

**OLD WINDSOR, WINDSOR, SL4 2NS**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**NGR SU 99127 74283**

*On behalf of*  
*Mr* ██████████

**NOVEMBER 2016**

**REPORT FOR** Mr [REDACTED]  
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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at Willow Dene, The Friary, Old Windsor in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, in the ceremonial county of Berkshire SL4 2NS. The excavations identified a wide ditch that was orientated N-S across the site. This ditch cut a subsoil layer from which a single sherd of pottery dated to the Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age was recovered. This ditch had been re-cut by a narrower ditch on the same alignment. A single sherd of pottery was recovered from this ditch and was dated to the Middle Bronze Age to the Middle Iron Age. Another negative feature was identified in section that may have been a continuation of the later re-cut or else a separate feature with a similar profile.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The site is located on the east side of The Friary, Old Windsor (NGR SU 99127 74283). The site is currently a residential property and the underlying geology is Shepperton Gravel (first terrace (BGS 1999 sheet 269, Solid and Drift)) and the site lies at approximately c. 15m OD.

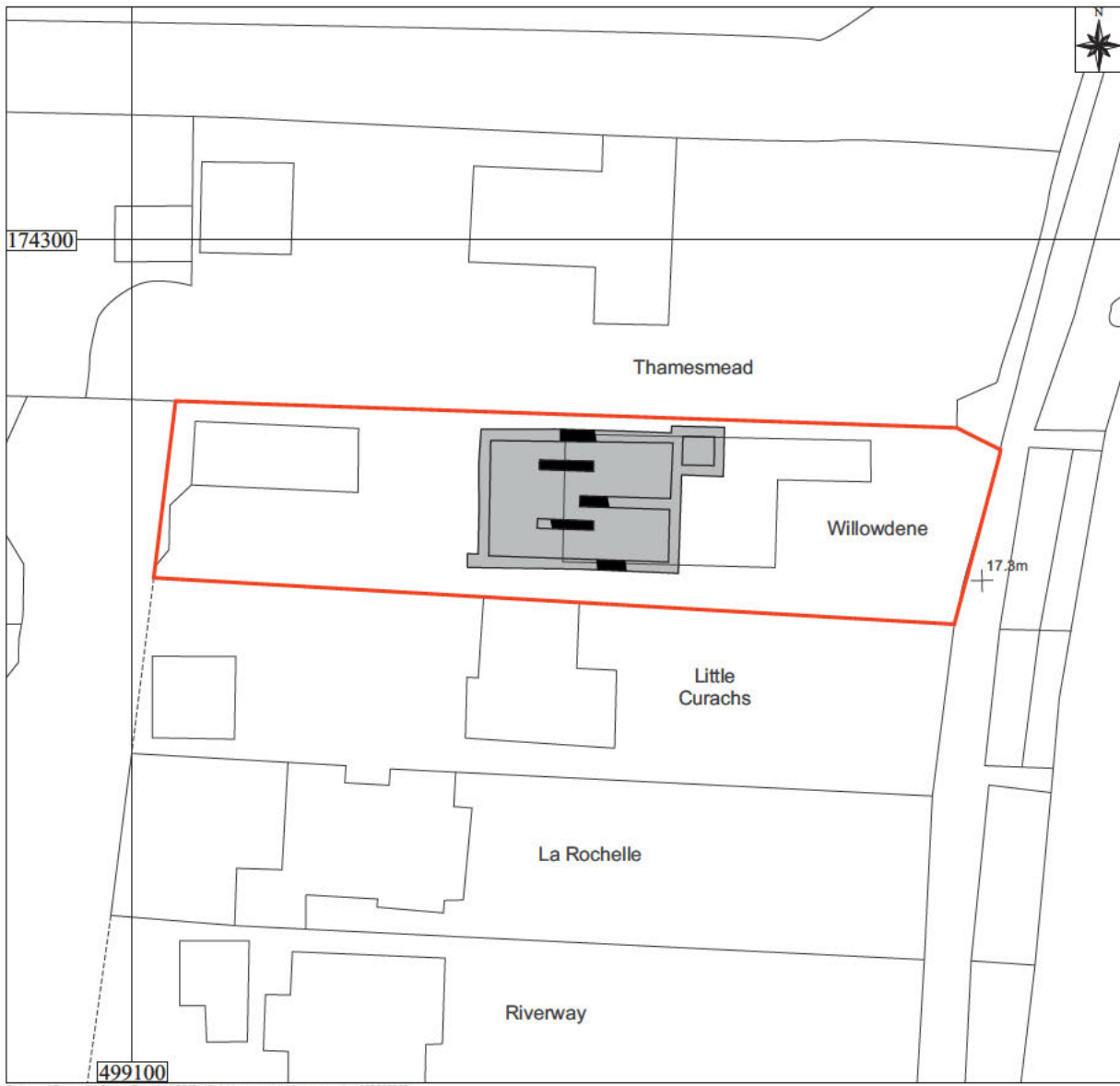
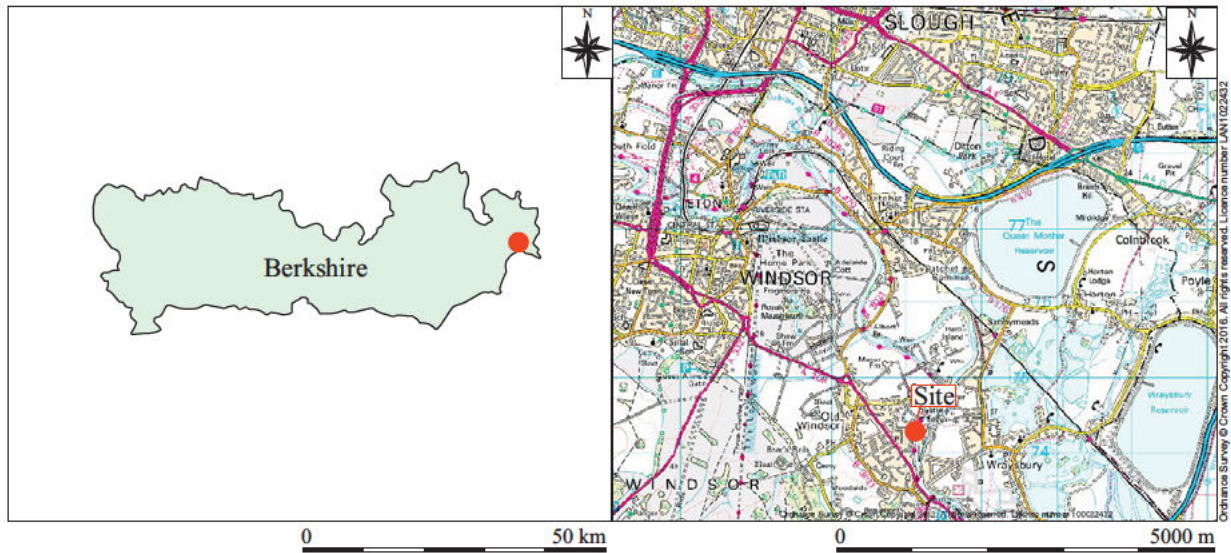
### **1.2 Planning Background**

Planning permission for the erection of detached dwelling and detached garage following demolition of existing dwelling and garage was granted by The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (15/0191/FULL). It was a condition of the planning permission that no development should take place within the development area until a programme of archaeological work had been secured by the applicant in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). This was to ensure the continued preservation *in situ* or by record of any finds made in this area of archaeological interest and was in line with relevant policies and Local Plan ARCH2, ARCH4. Berkshire Archaeology, advisors to the LPA, had advised that a watching brief would be appropriate for this development. The work was carried out to a written scheme of investigation (JMHS 2016) agreed to by the LPA.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The application site lies 25m to the south of the nationally-important Scheduled Monument of Kingsbury, Old Windsor, which encompasses the site of an early medieval settlement and medieval royal palace (Monument No. 1006995). The Monument protects an extensive and high-status early medieval settlement, with Roman antecedents. An early medieval settlement was established in the 7th or 8th century AD and by the 11th century it was the site of a royal palace or *vill* of Edward the Confessor and the early Norman kings. The last court was held at Old Windsor in AD 1107 after which the Castle at New Windsor became the focus of the royal estate.

Excavations outside of the Scheduled area, including within The Friary, have shown that buried archaeological remains also survive in these areas.



Key Site boundary Monitored area Archaeological features

Figure 1: Site location

Exploratory excavations in The Friary in the 1950s for example recorded a high number of finds of Roman tile suggesting a major building nearby.

The above archaeological background was taken from an Advice Note from Berkshire Archaeology (Smith 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2015)

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To record any archaeological remains that will be impacted on by the groundworks.

In particular:

- To record any Roman or medieval remains in relation to the known Roman and landscape of the area.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisors to The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Borough Council.

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

### **3.2 Methodology**

An archaeologist maintained a presence on site during the course of all excavations for the new build that would potentially disturb or destroy archaeological remains. This included the excavations for foundation, service/drainage trenches, where they were considered to impact on archaeological layers. The work did not include the observance of the excavations of the backfilled swimming pool. The pool was greater than 2m in depth and the original excavation for it would have removed any underlying archaeology.

There was no archaeological observance of the demolition of the former dwelling, removal of building platform, and removal of foundations. This area had already been removed and backfilled by the demolition company before the archaeologist was asked to attend site.

An archaeologist was present during the excavation of the foundation trenches for the new property. The trenches were *c.* 0.7m wide and between 1.3m – 1.5m deep (Fig. 2)

The last phase of monitoring consisted of the monitoring the excavation of a service trench located running east – west at the front of the development (Fig. 2) This was

excavated through previously disturbed ground to expose the original services and continued watching of this was not considered necessary.

The new build for the garage was to be built on the original hard standing so there was no necessity for archaeological observance in this area.

Where archaeological horizons were encountered they were cleaned by hand and excavated appropriately. Standard 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. A photographic record was also produced.

The spoil from the excavation was also examined for finds, visually and with a metal detector.

## 4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in **bold** indicate structural features.

The lowest layer identified was a light yellow gravel layer with grey patches (5). This was identified as the natural gravels formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary period (Fig. 2, section 1). This layer was overlain by a yellow to light orange, medium to fine sand (4). This layer formed a 0.6 to 0.7m layer above the gravel and was also considered to be a natural deposit. Deposited above this was a dark orange brown sandy loam (3). This was between 0.3m and 0.4m thick and was depleted in some parts of the site down to less than 0.1m. It had a diffuse upper horizon and towards the far south of the site it was visually absent. The layer was identified as an illuviated B horizon (subsoil) (Fig. 2, section 1).

Observed in the section in the central foundation trenches was a large negative feature, cut 14 (Fig. 2, sections 3 to 5), which was a wide ditch that was orientated north – south. In Section 3, Ditch 14 cut through deposit 3 but in Section 5, due to the limit of the excavation, it was not possible to ascertain which deposit it cut through at the highest level.

Section 4 (Fig. 2, section 4) shows the western edge of ditch 14 where it cuts an unidentified feature 13. This feature was only visible in section and has been interpreted as an earlier negative feature. It was 0.34m deep with a shallow sloping side and a concave base. It was filled by an orange brown silty sand (12) that contained no finds.

Ditch 14 was observed mostly in section and was only observed at a much truncated level in plan, which did not reflect its true width and depth (Fig.2, plan & sections 3 to 5. Plates 1 and 2). None of the foundation sections revealed a full profile of the ditch but it was possible to estimate the width between overlapping sections. It is estimated that Ditch 14 was c.4.22m wide towards the south widening to c.4.6m towards the north of the site. Ditch 14 was greater than 0.7m deep and was filled by a mid yellowish grey brown sandy loam (10).

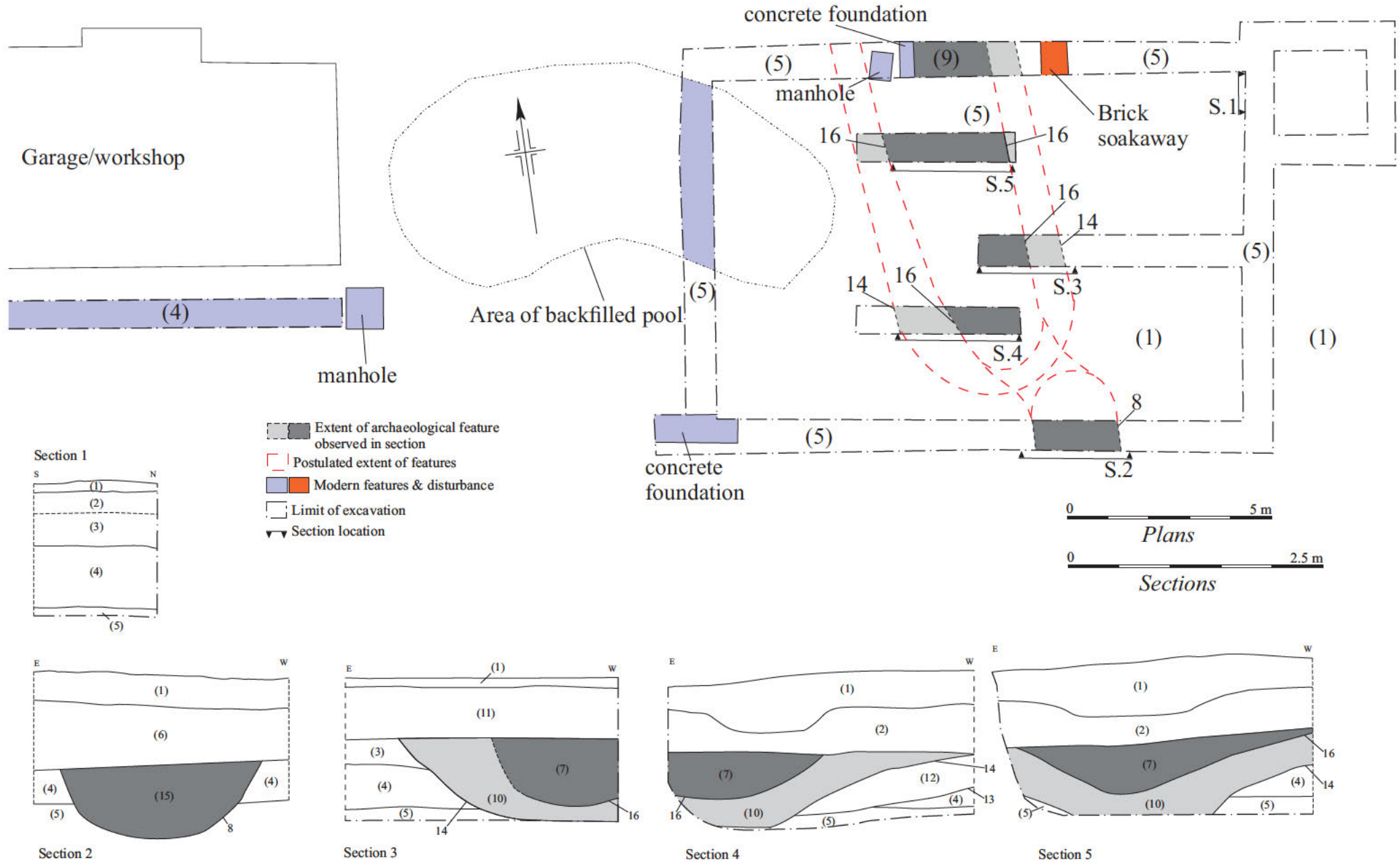


Figure 2: Plan and Sections



The fill of Ditch 14, context (10) appeared to be re-cut by a later ditch, cut 16 which was possibly the same as Cut 8 (Fig.2, plan and sections 2 to 5). Cut 8 was observed as a negative feature in the north and south sections of the southern foundation trench. In this part of the site, Cut 8 cut the natural sand layer (4) and ditch 14 was visibly absent in this foundation trench. Cut 8 was 1.96m wide, 0.7m deep with steep concave sides and was filled by a very dark grey brown, moist sandy silt loam (15). Cut 8 was interpreted as a ditch continuing into the area of the central foundations (section 4, 3, and 5) but was given a different context number, 16, due to the possibility that these were two similar but separate features. The profile of Ditch 16 changed from north to south becoming wider and shallower in the north. In the southerly of the central foundation trenches it had a similar depth and profile to that of Cut 8 (Fig.2, sections 2-5).

In central area of the new build, the fill of the ditch re-cut (7), whilst similar in appearance to fill (15), was much drier in texture. This, however, might be explained by the presence of the former house over this part of site, which would have sealed the ditch from the direct effects of precipitation.

In the north foundation was a 0.2 to 0.3m thick deposit of dark grey brown, moist sandy silt loam with rooting (9). This deposit had originally been identified as a buried soil layer but was later considered to be the continuation of the upper ditch fill and the same as context (7). The profile of the feature at this point was much shallower and the edge of the cut was not easy to discern.



Plate 1. Section 4, Ditch 14 and re-cut 16. South view.

The upper ditch fills were overlain by several layers of topsoil and overburden (Fig. 2, section 1 to 5). In section 2 ditch fill (15) was overlain by a 0.7m thick layer of dark brown sandy loam (6). In the central foundation trench ditch fill (7) was overlain by a 0.5m thick mixture of concrete and rubble and grey brown sandy loam (11). This layer was identified as relating to the recent demolition of the former building. In the other foundation trenches fills (7) and (9) were overlain by a 0.2m to 0.4m mid brown loamy sand (2). This soil horizon was identified as a buried topsoil horizon which had mostly lay under the former house. In contrast to context (2), context (6) was thicker and more richly organic and was identified as deeper garden topsoil layer that lay outside the footprint of the former house. Above these layers, across most of the site

was a 0.1m to 0.55m thick layer of mid brown sand with a frequent inclusion of rubble and ceramic building material (1). This was identified as recent disturbance across site as a consequence of the demolition of the original building.



Plate 2. Section 5, Ditch 14 and re-cut 16. South view.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 The Prehistoric Pottery *by Frances Raymond*

The two wall sherds (35g.) are both featureless and can only be dated by fabric characteristics. Both fragments are hard handmade wares with oxidised exteriors. The example from the subsoil (03) is a moderately abraded sandy fabric tempered with sparse burnt flint (up to 2mm.). Sandy wares with finer inclusions are represented in Late Bronze Age assemblages, but became more common during the Earliest Iron Age in the Thames Valley and it is perhaps most likely that the sherd is of this phase.

The second wall fragment (10g.) from (07) is in fresh condition with common voids characteristic of shell (up to 4mm.) and rare burnt flint (up to 1.5mm.). The fabric is not chronologically sensitive, comparing with similar wares that can occur as a minority component in assemblages dating from the Middle Bronze Age into the Middle Iron Age.

### 5.2 The Ceramic tile *by Gavin Davis*

A single fragment of red ceramic tile with a thin grey core was recovered from context (11). The tile weighed 126.9g and had one surviving edge but was otherwise very fragmentary. It was not possible to date the fragment but the context it came from was identified as modern and related to recent demolition.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The nature of the excavations made it difficult to identify ditch cuts in plan but what could be identified in section indicated a very wide ditch, 14, which survived as quite a shallow feature in proportion to its breadth. The fill of this ditch contained no finds

but it was observed cutting a subsoil layer from which a single sherd of pottery was recovered that could be dated to Late Bronze Age - Early Iron Age. It has been considered that this type of pottery became more common in the Thames Valley during the Earliest Iron Age and the feature may be of this phase or later. This ditch was later re-cut by a narrower ditch, 16, that contained a sherd of pottery dated from the Middle Bronze Age to the Middle Iron Age. With consideration of the dating of the earlier phase, this re-cut is also considered to date to the Iron Age or later. A further negative feature, 8, was undated but may have been a continuation of the ditch re-cut or a similar but separate feature.

Except for a fragment of ceramic tile recovered from a demolition layer, no other finds or features were recovered from the site.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

#### Paper record

The project brief

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site record

#### Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the appropriate museum when one becomes available that will accept archives for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, (2014) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.

John Moore Heritage Services, (2016) *Willow Dene, The Friary, Old Windsor, Windsor Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation* (unpublished)

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