

Common Lane,
Brightwalton,
Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation
for
English Village Housing Association

Common Lane, Brightwalton, Berkshire
Archaeological Evaluation

Project 94/40

by Lucy Howell and Steve Ford

INTRODUCTION

This report documents an evaluation of a 0.5ha. area of land lying on the west side of Brightwalton, Berkshire (Fig. 1). This work was commissioned by Mr. Ian Gillespie of English Villages Housing Association, according to a brief prepared by the archaeological advisor to the County Council (Babtie, Shaw and Morton).

The site, which is currently in use as pasture and a children's playground is subject to a planning application to Newbury District Council for a small housing development. A field evaluation was requested by the planning authorities to assess the archaeological potential of the site as set out in *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16, 1990). This information is to accompany the planning application.

The fieldwork took place in September 1994 and the site code is BW 94.

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site lies adjacent to Common Lane, west of Brightwalton, Berkshire, (SU42557935), on level ground, at the bottom of a gentle slope to the north west, at a height of 185 m. above OD. (Fig. 2). It is located on an underlying geology of Clay-with-Flint, which locally can consist of patches of sandy clay.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological potential of the site is derived from documentary sources and the village is known to have been in existence from at least Late Saxon times

(Richards 1978). There is little information about the origins and development of the village and if archaeological deposits are present within the proposal area they could provide much information about the use and development of the high downlands in Saxon and Medieval times.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the evaluation was to discover the location, date, nature, extent, and state of preservation of any archaeological sites or deposits within the area proposed for development.

The Archaeological Advisors' brief required a 4% (minimum) machine dug sample of the 0.5 ha. area. Current landuse of the proposed area was not suitable for several other evaluation techniques such as fieldwalking and geophysical survey. The trenches were to be located randomly but evenly across the site except for one trench aligned parallel to the lane. After the topsoil was removed archaeological deposits were looked for and spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

RESULTS

On commencement of the evaluation it was found that the site limit had been reduced in size slightly, as the children's play area could not be disturbed.

This caused an alteration in the location of the trenches and a reduction in the number that could be dug. Five trenches, with a total length of 114.5 m., were eventually excavated by a JCB-type machine fitted with a ditching bucket. The trenches were 1.6 m. wide, and of varying length, located as shown in Figure 3. They are detailed in appendix 1.

Typically 0.25-0.30 m. of turf and topsoil overlay a light to mid brown silty clay subsoil, usually about 0.10-0.15 m. thick but increasing to 0.25-0.30 m.

in trench 1. This subsoil overlay the silty clay bedrock.

Bedrock was not reached in trench 3 as the trench contained made up ground and service pipes (water?) to a depth of at least 1.20 m. Trench 4 also contained two pipe trenches, one large and one small. Trenches 2 and 5 were archaeologically sterile and trench 1 contained only four modern post holes and a land drain.

THE FINDS by Steve Ford

The only finds recovered all came from made ground in trench 3. These consisted of a Prehistoric flint core and two sherds of pottery, possibly of Roman date.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the proposal area lies in a potentially archaeological significant location no archaeological deposits were found in this evaluation. The few finds recovered came from made ground whose provenance is unknown. One trench (trench 3) had been completely disturbed to a depth of at least 1.2 m, and other areas of disturbed ground may be present within the proposal area. On the basis of the evidence from these trenches, the site would appear to have no archaeological potential.

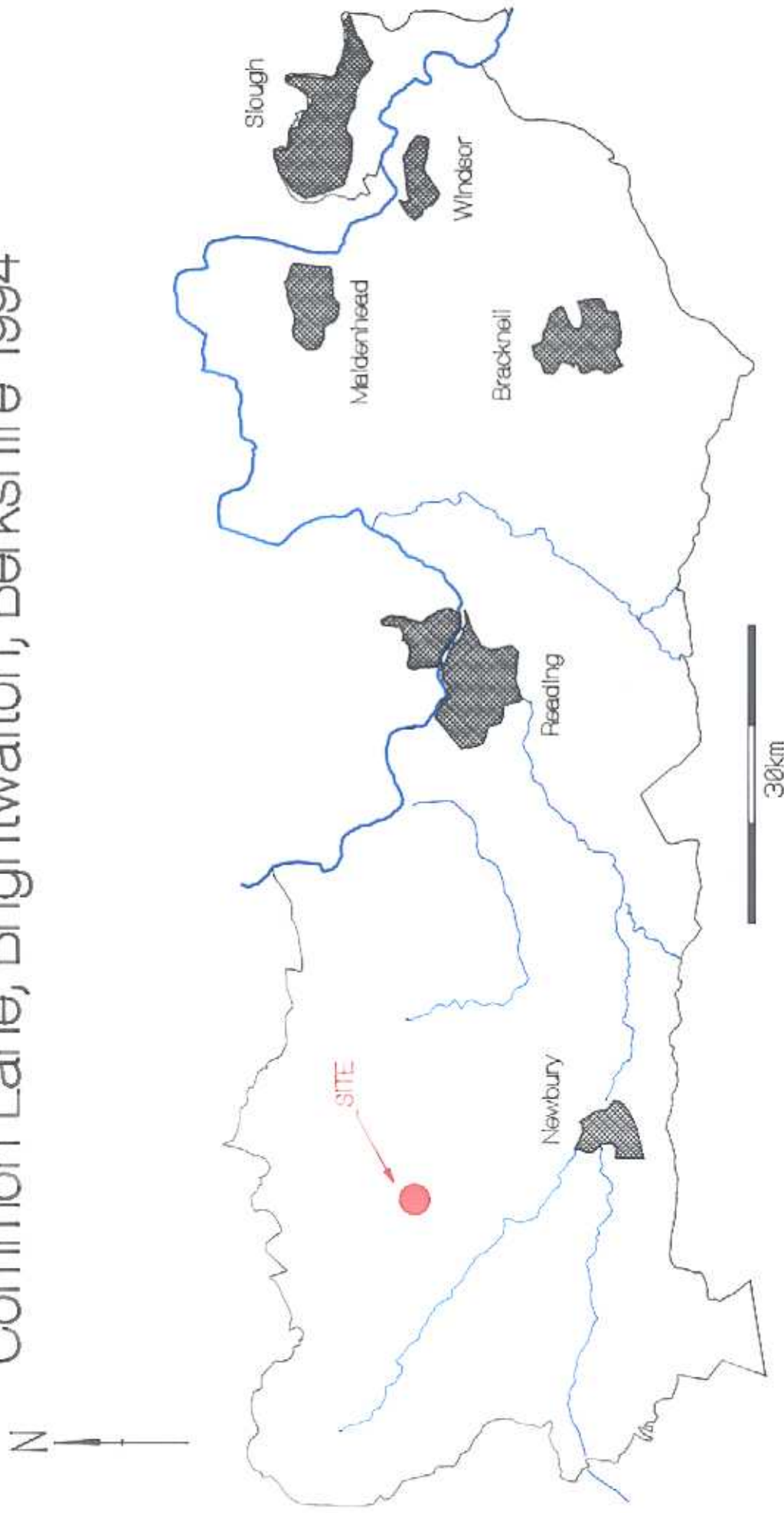
REFERENCES

- PPG16 1990: *Archaeology and Planning Department of the Environment Planning Guidance 16.* HMSO.
- RICHARDS, J.C. 1978: *The Archaeology of the Berkshire Downs.* Berks. Archacol. Committee no.3 Reading.

APPENDIX 1- Trench details
0 m. at south or west end

Trench	Length (m.)	Depth (m.)	Comment
1	24.5	0.50-0.60	Four modern post holes and a land drain
2	30	0.45	
3	20	0.60-0.80	Test pit to 1.2 m. Made ground with several pipe trenches
4	20	0.40	Large pipe trench 7-11 m; small pipe trench at 19m
5	20	0.35	

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Figure 1. Location of site within county.

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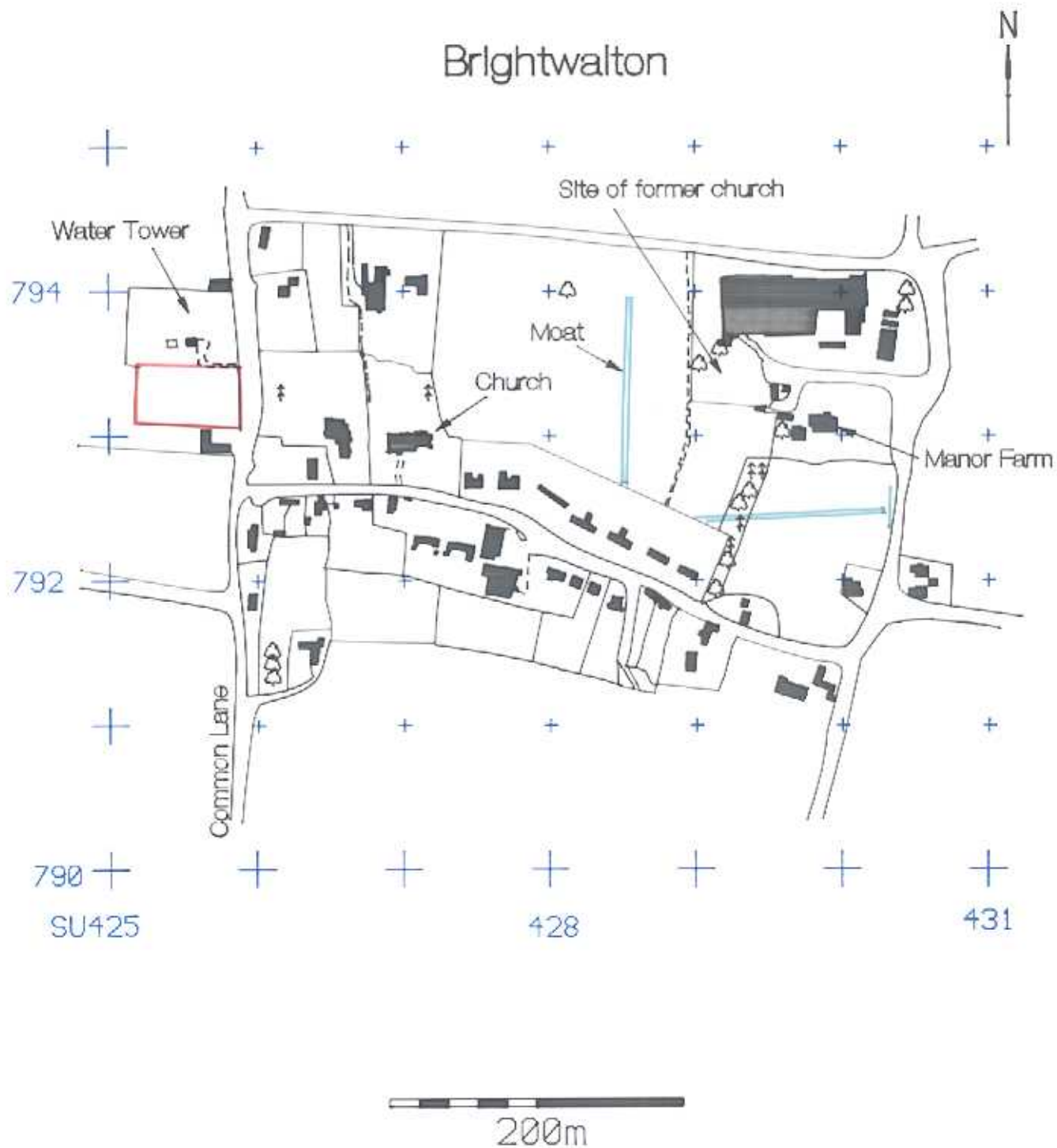


Figure 2. Location of site in village.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches