

Castle Royal Golf Course,
Knowl Hill,
Berkshire.

An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Windsor Golf Club Plc

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Project 96/12

By Jason Walker

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief commissioned by Mr. S. Buchanan-Barrow of Gardiner and Theobald, on behalf of Windsor Golf Club Plc as a condition on the planning permission to redevelop part of the site for a club house and related parking facilities at Castle Royal Golf Course. The archaeological fieldwork was required as set out in *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16, 1990), and carried out according to a specification approved by Babbie Group Ltd. (archaeological advisors to Berkshire County Council).

The archaeological investigation was originally envisaged as a two stage project. The first part was to comprise a series of hand dug test pits in the area of the proposed car park. The topsoil from these test pits was to be sieved to recover artefacts. The test pitting was intended to establish the density of artefacts in the topsoil and the extent to which they clustered. This can be used to interpret the significance of the finds and locate the presence of occupation sites. Much early Prehistoric settlement is now reflected only by the presence of scatters of stone (flint) tools in the topsoil. However, it was found that the majority of the intended area had already been disturbed with the removal and replacement of topsoil. Any patterning of artefacts in this topsoil would be of questionable value.

The second part of the project was to consist of a watching brief during groundworks involving removal of topsoil and the digging of foundation trenches. It is this latter section which forms the basis of this report.

The watching brief was carried out by Jason Walker on the 15th and 17th of April 1996. The site code is CRGC 96.

Topography and Geology

The site is located to the south of the A4 Bath Road, c.1 km. to the south west of Knowl Hill and is centred on SU 817786 (Figs. 1 and 2).

The site slopes gently to the south east and is situated at c.60 m. above OD. The solid geology of the site is Reading Beds (BGS 1981). This is overlain by a thin layer of topsoil (0.25 - 0.30 m). No buried topsoil, subsoil or colluvial deposits were observed.

Archaeological background

The area of the golf course has generated finds of Prehistoric flint flakes and Roman and Medieval pottery during the course of the East Berkshire Archaeological Survey (Ford 1987). Altogether three areas of archaeological potential have been highlighted in the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record for the vicinity of the site.

Objectives and Methodology

The watching brief was to monitor topsoil stripping of the areas of the proposed car park, footprint of the new building and access roads. Any archaeological deposits were to be excavated and recorded by means of drawn sections, plans, photographs and written descriptions. Any finds were to be retained for further study.

Results

The main component of the field work comprised the observation of the topsoil stripping over an area of approximately 80 sq. m. This area was systematically searched for archaeological features but none were found. Previously disturbed areas were heavily rutted. A single sherd of sandy Roman or Medieval pottery was found in this area (Fig. 3).

After the topsoil was removed from the car park area, as part of a levelling proce-

ture, the natural clay was machined into at a depth of 1.5m to the north of the site. The northern- and westernmost sections created as a result of this process were systematically checked and were also found to be void of any archaeological features.

The sides of the trenches for the footings of the building were inspected but no archaeological deposits were observed.

In addition to the above, the excavation of c.50 m. of a 1 m. deep perimeter foundation trench was observed, as was the stripping of topsoil and made ground along a c.40 m. of access road to the carpark. Apart from modern drainage and waterpipe services running east- west along the road, no features of archaeological interest were in evidence in either area.

Conclusions

No archaeological deposits were observed within the development area. The single sherd of Roman/Medieval pottery is likely to reflect the practice of manuring of arable land at these times, with finds accidentally incorporated in manure.

References

- BGS 1981: British Geological Survey, sheet 269 1:50,000.
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Occ. paper 1. (Reading).
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Castle Royal Golf Club, Hare Hatch, Berkshire 1996

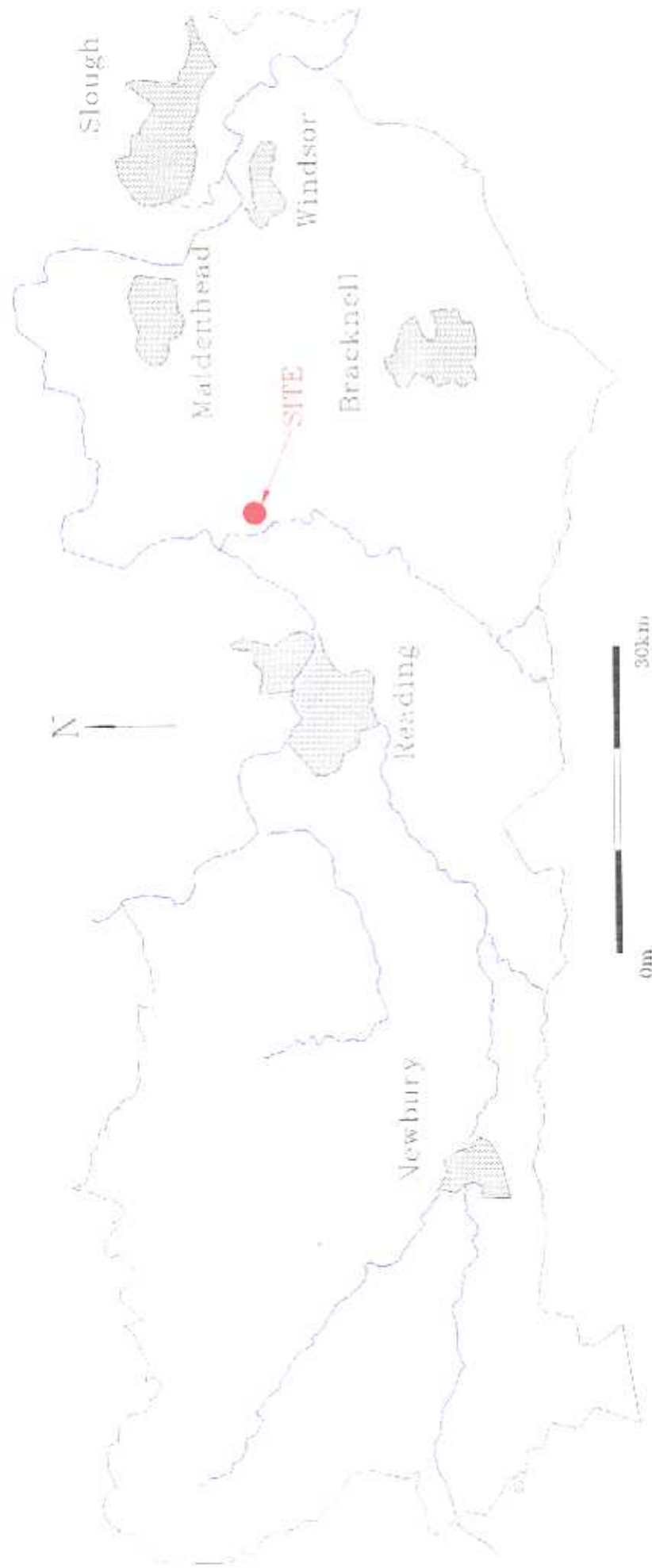


Figure 1 Location of site within Berkshire.

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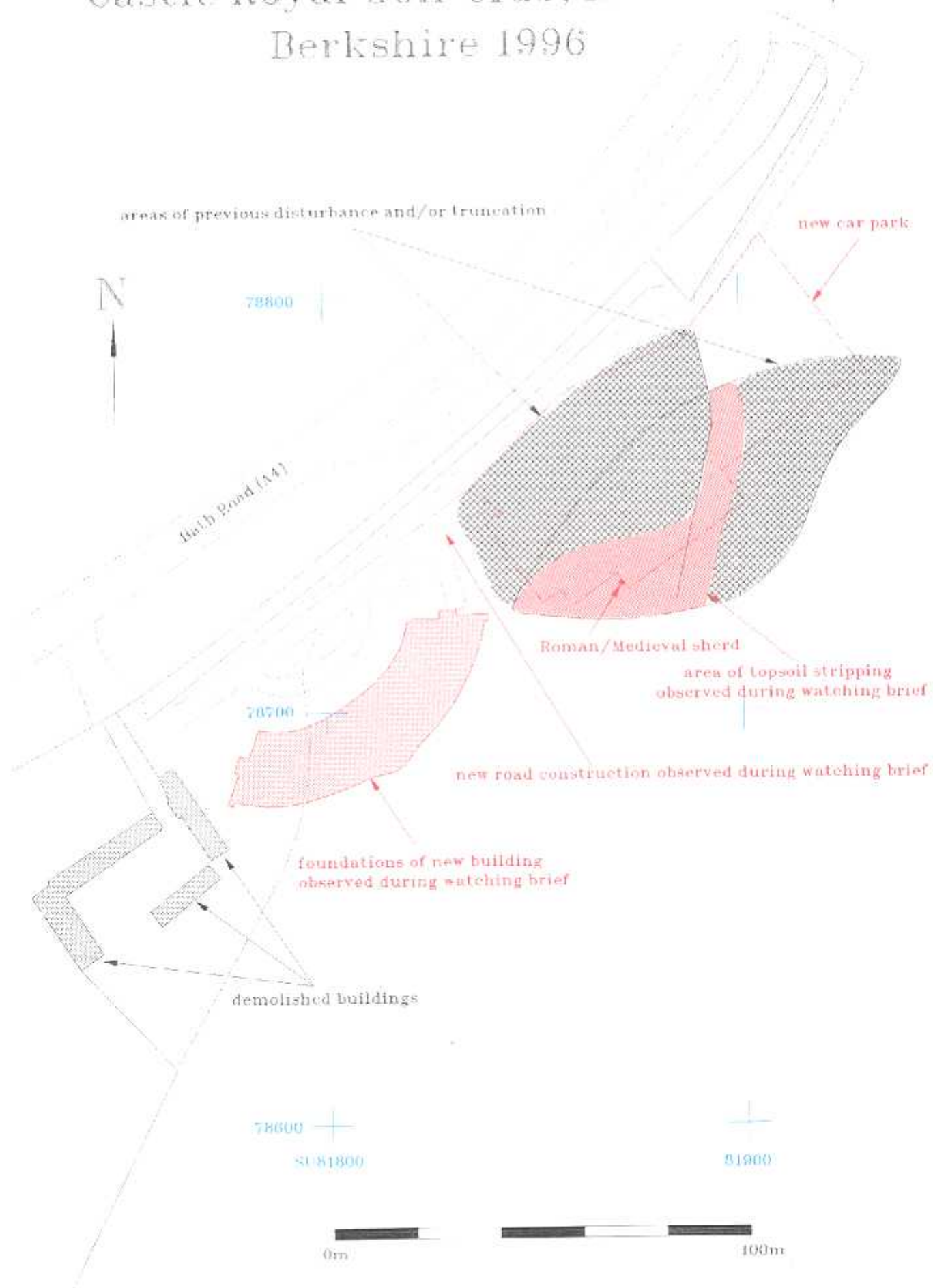


Figure 3. Location of watching brief areas.