

**Land at the corner of Christchurch Gardens  
and Basingstoke Road, Reading**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for

Mr. Brian Ward

February 1997

**Land at the corner of Christchurch Gardens and  
Basingstoke Road, Reading  
An Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Stephen D. G. Weaver**

**Report 97/3**

**Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at land at the corner of Christchurch Gardens and Basingstoke Road (SU 72040 72400). The work was commissioned by Mr. Brian Ward of 116 Oak Tree Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6JY.

A planning application (96/0174) was submitted to Reading Borough Council to erect two houses following the demolition of an existing structure. A condition on the granting of planning permission required a watching brief to be carried out during the groundworks for the two new houses. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environments' Policy and Planning Guidance Note, **Archaeology and Planning** (PPG 16, 1990). The watching brief was carried out to a specification approved by Mr. P. Fasham, Principal Archaeologist at Babtie Public Services and archaeological advisor to the local planning authority. The field work was undertaken by Steven D. G. Weaver, Graham Hull and Stuart Wilkinson and the site code is CRG97/3.

**Location, Topography and Geology**

The site is located to the south of Reading town centre on a Plateau Gravel terrace (BGS 1946) overlooking the valley of the river Thames (Fig. 1)

## **Objectives and Methodology**

The aims of the watching brief were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits located during the groundworks. Several visits were made to the site during the excavation of the foundation trenches for the two buildings.

## **Results**

### *Structure 1* (Fig. 2)

The foundation trenches for this building ranged in depth from 0.98 m. to 2 m. depending upon the amount of modern disturbance or natural tree root action. The trenches excavated for the western side of the structure revealed c. 0.50 m. of topsoil over a layer of subsoil 0.20 m. deep which itself overlay the natural gravel. The central and eastern trenches were significantly deeper due to ground disturbance and consisted of c. 0.42 m. of topsoil over 1.2 m. of made ground which lay above and in some places cut the gravel to reveal the underlying clay.

A number of hollows or pits, perhaps the result of localised gravel extraction, had been backfilled with modern rubbish such as glass bottles, bricks, tile and clinker. No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were observed.

### *Structure 2* (Fig. 2)

The foundation trenches for this structure were located within the area that had been previously built on and they ranged in depth from 1.4 m. to 1.6 m. Apart from a thin layer of topsoil, the trenches revealed made ground overlying gravel. In deeper areas the trenches were excavated through the gravel to the clay beneath.

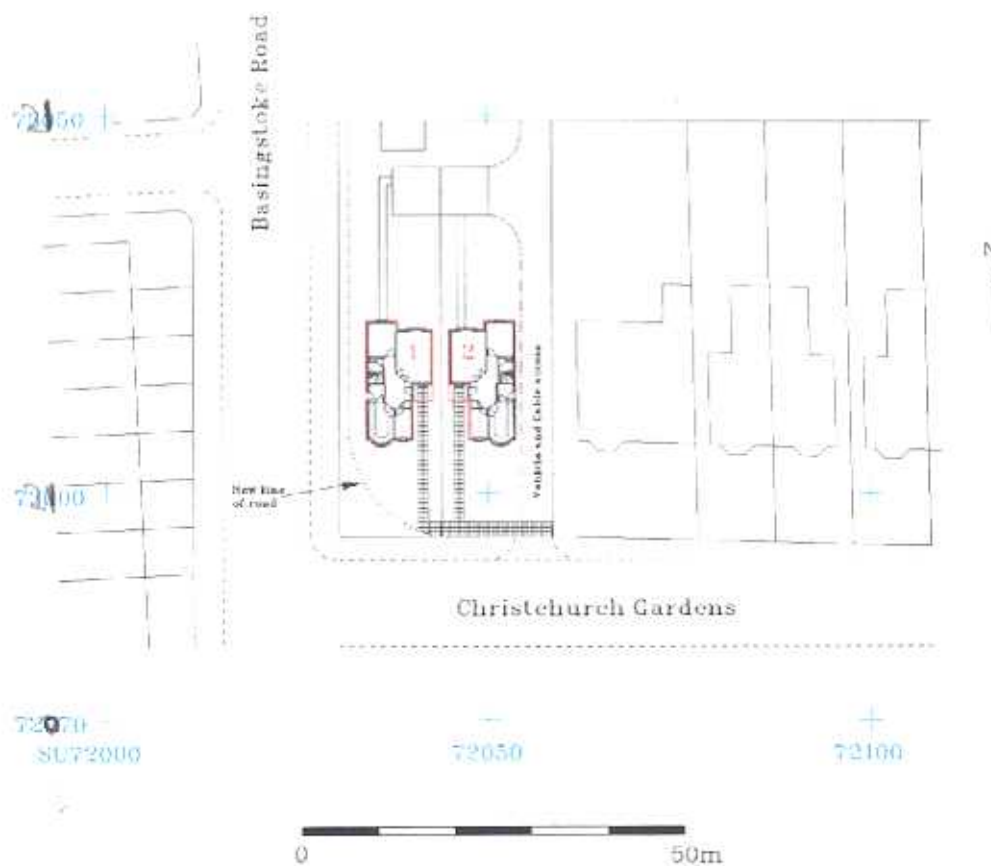
Modern material such as brick, tile and a shoe heel were found within the made ground together with the old footings of the previous building and a dump of coal. No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were observed.

### **Conclusion**

The observation of the groundworks for the two new buildings failed to reveal anything of an archaeological nature.

## References

- BGS, 1946: **British Geological Survey**, 1:50,000, Sheet 268, Drift Edition. Keyworth.
- PPG 16, 1990: **Archaeology and Planning**. Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16. (HMSO)



Land at the Corner of Basingstoke Road  
and Christchurch Gardens, Reading,  
Berkshire, 1996

Figure 1. Location of site within Reading  
and Berkshire.



Land at the Corner of Basingstoke Road and Christchurch Gardens, Reading, Berkshire, 1997

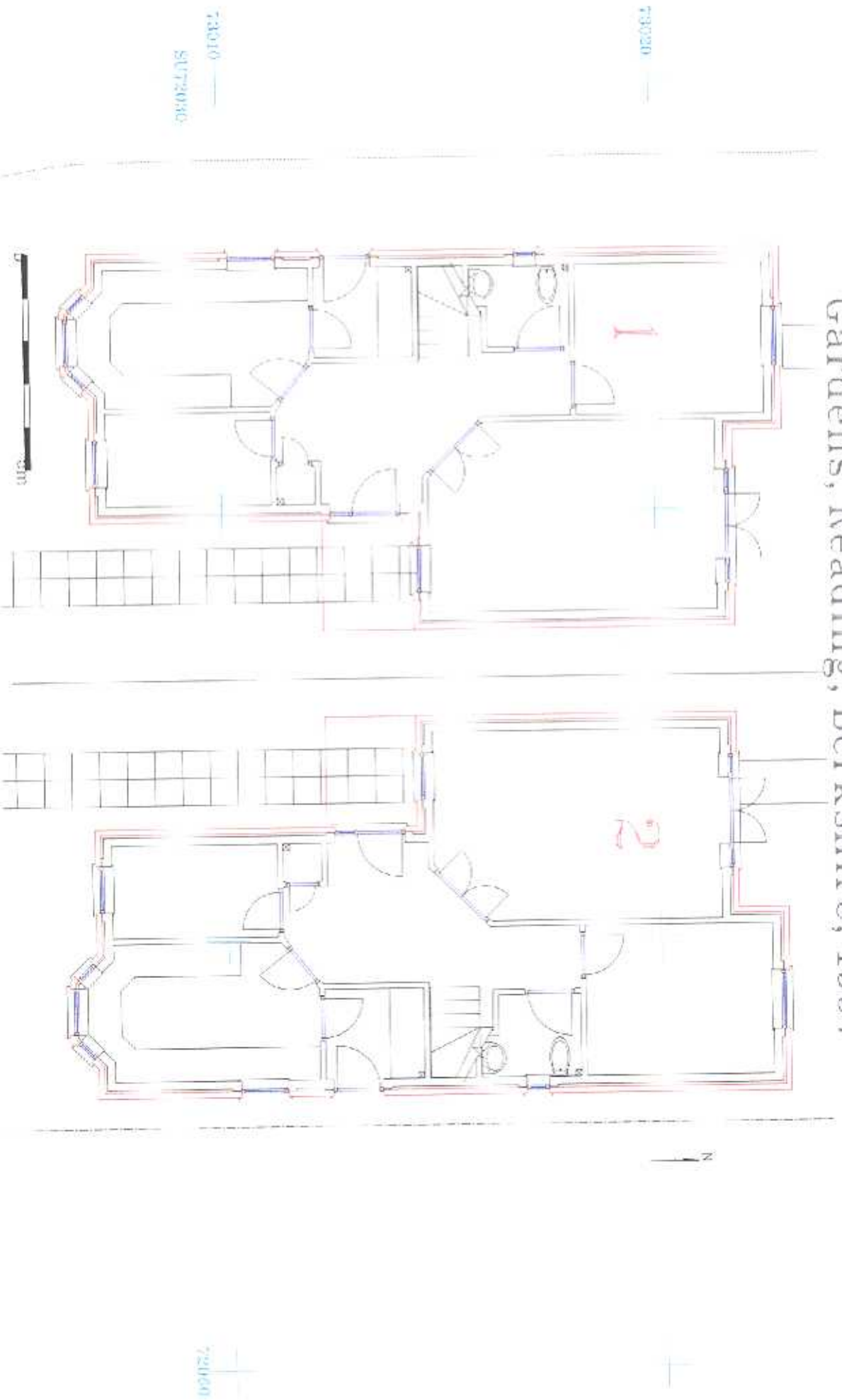


Figure 2. Plan of foundation trenches.