

**Jersey Yard, Berkshire College of Agriculture,  
Hall Place, Burchetts Green, Maidenhead,  
Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
for Berkshire College of Agriculture**

by Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Site Code BCA99/79

**December 1999**

## Summary

**Site name:** Jersey Yard, Hall Place, Berkshire College of Agriculture, Burchetts Green, Maidenhead.

**Grid reference:** SU 83330 81958

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and Duration of Project:** 22nd November to 2nd December 1999

**Area of Site:** 75 sq m

**Summary of Results:** Examination of stripped area and trenches for foundations and services did not reveal any archaeological features but did produce two small fragments of pottery of Roman, and Iron Age/Roman date, and a prehistoric struck flint.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, RG1 5NR, and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

**Site Code:** BCA99/79

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**Report 99/79**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out in Jersey Yard, Berkshire College of Agriculture, Burchetts Green (SU 83330 81958) (Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Wilf Longstaff, of Wilf Longstaff Associates, 7 Cambrian Way, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 7DD, on behalf of the Berkshire College of Agriculture.

Planning permission (99/33607 and 8) has been granted by The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the extension to the existing former stable block and outbuildings to create a new classroom as a business study area. The permission is subject to a condition for an archaeological watching brief. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) and the Borough policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr R Bourn, Senior Archaeologist for Babcote Group, archaeological advisors to the Royal Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford on three visits between 22nd November and 2nd December 1999. The site code is BCA99/799 and the archive will be deposited with Reading Museum.

## **Location, Topography and Geology**

The site is located within Jersey Yard which is to the north of the main house forming the Hall Place complex (Fig 2). The site butts up against the existing stable block to the south, an outbuilding to the east, and a wall to the west. Prior to development the area was occupied by temporary buildings. According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 1974) the underlying geology is Upper Chalk. However, this was not observed in the foundation trench. The natural geology was a clayey sand, which is either a thin capping to the chalk or is an outlier of the nearby Reading Beds. The site lies on level ground at a height of c. 80m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological Background**

Hall Place, the outbuildings and parkland were built in 1728 on land formerly part of the estate of Hurley Priory. The house is reported to have replaced an earlier house with Medieval origins but the location of the latter is not known. Fieldwalking (surface collection of artefacts from ploughed fields) of the surrounding area located large

quantities of prehistoric struck flint suggesting dense occupation in Neolithic and Bronze Age times (Ford 1987). It was possible, therefore, that the development proposal may have revealed deposits relating to any houses ancestral to the current one and may also have revealed deposits of prehistoric date.

## **Objectives and Methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work within the proposal area. This was to comprise examination of the foundation trench and any deep service runs for the new building.

## **Results**

Following the breaking and removal of concrete, which exposed an area of made ground, a single foundation trench was dug defining the outer limits of the new building. The trench was 0.9m deep and 0.6m wide. The stratigraphy was fairly uniform and revealed 0.1m of concrete overlying 0.5m of made ground (brick rubble and soil) above the clayey sand natural. The base of the trench for the southern element was hand cleaned. The wall footings of the two buildings forming the southern and eastern side were exposed and were seen to be founded at a depth of 0.8m.

Three larger holes were dug, 1.5 x 1.0 x 0.8m deep, to facilitate underpinning of the adjacent walls (Fig 3). Two of these were located coincident with service runs and only revealed made ground. The third hole located adjacent to the west wall exposed the natural clayey sand which was hand cleaned and examined but no cut features were observed.

No archaeological deposits or features were observed, either in the whole area following removal of concrete, or in the foundation trench.

## **Finds**

### *Struck flint*

A single struck flint was recovered from the southern foundation trench from a position just within the top of the natural clayey sand. The flake is small and cortical and is chronologically undiagnostic. It could belong to any time from the Mesolithic to Bronze Age periods.

### *Pottery*

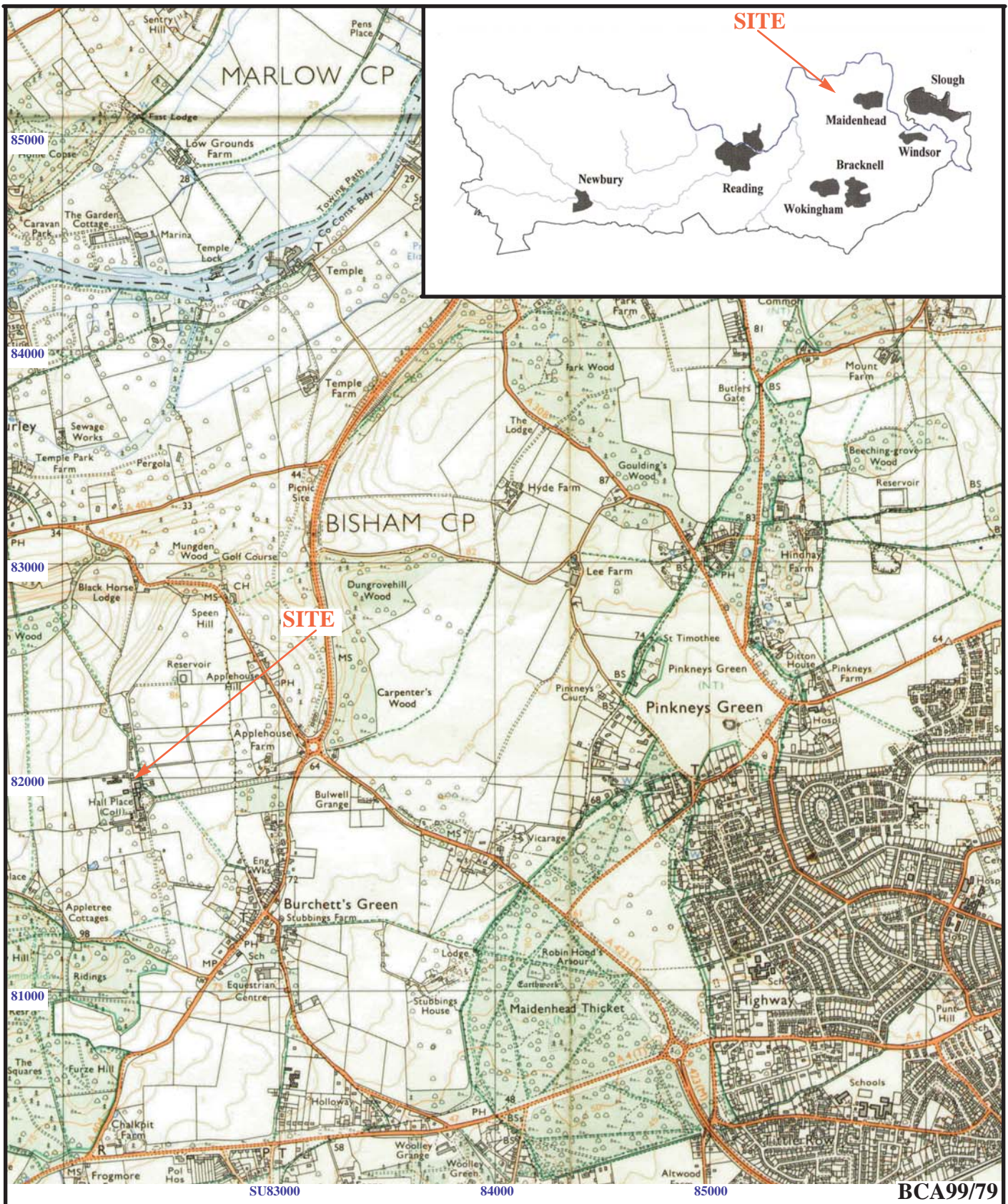
Two small sherds (<1 gm each) of pottery were recovered from the southern foundation trench, also from a position just within the top of the natural clayey sand. One of the sherds was tempered with sand and some flint and could be Iron Age–Roman in date. The other sherd was very small and was tempered with mica and some sand and is probably Roman.

### **Conclusion**

The watching brief did not locate any archaeological deposits on the site. A few finds of flint and pottery were recovered and probably represent either casual loss (flint) or finds accidentally incorporated into manure which was subsequently spread onto fields.

### **References**

- BGS, 1974, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 255, Drift Edition, Keyworth  
Ford, S, 1987, *The East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Department of Highways and Planning, Occ Paper 1, Reading  
PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, HMSO



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Berkshire, 1999**

Figure 1. Location of site within Burchetts Green and Berkshire.

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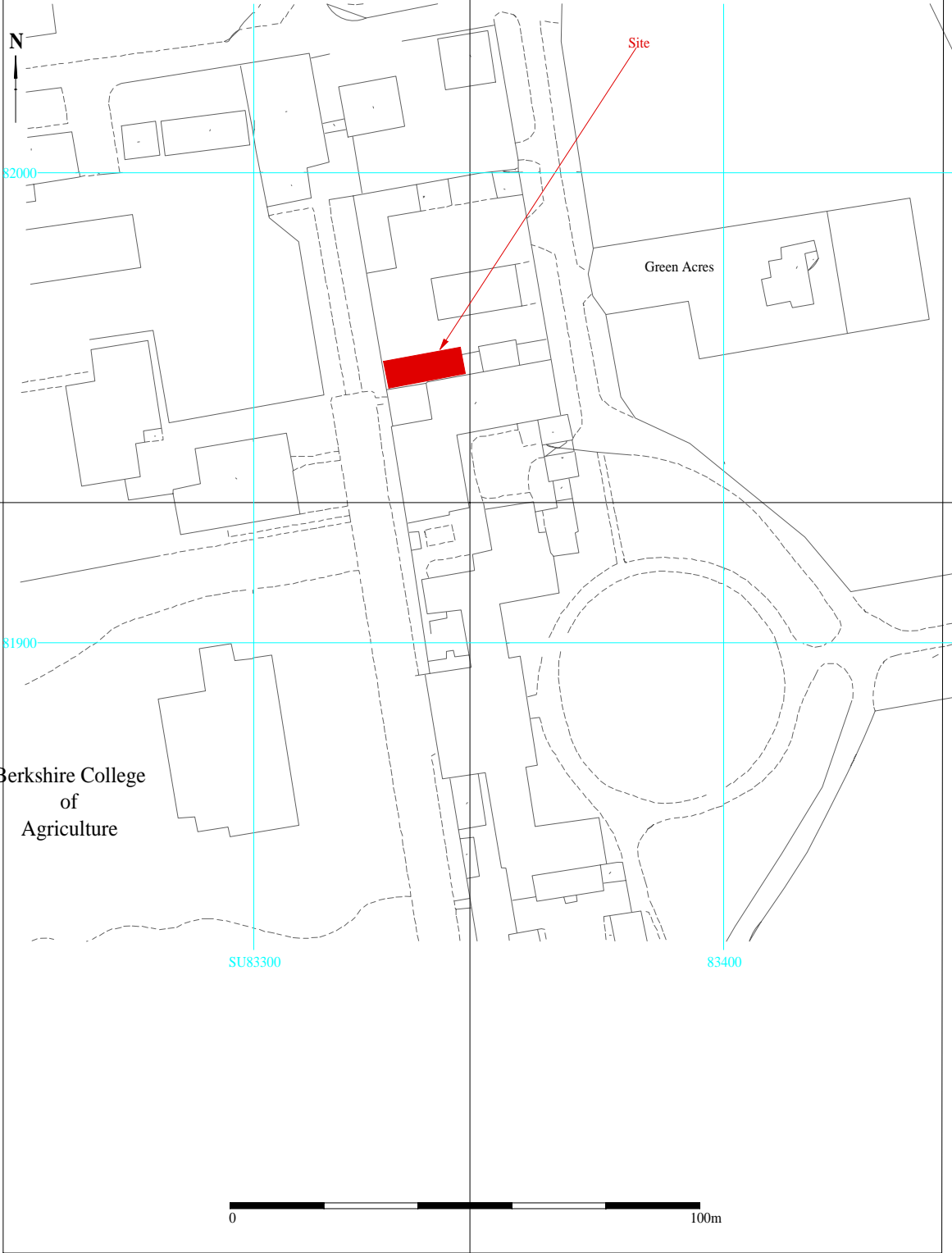


Figure 2. Location of site.

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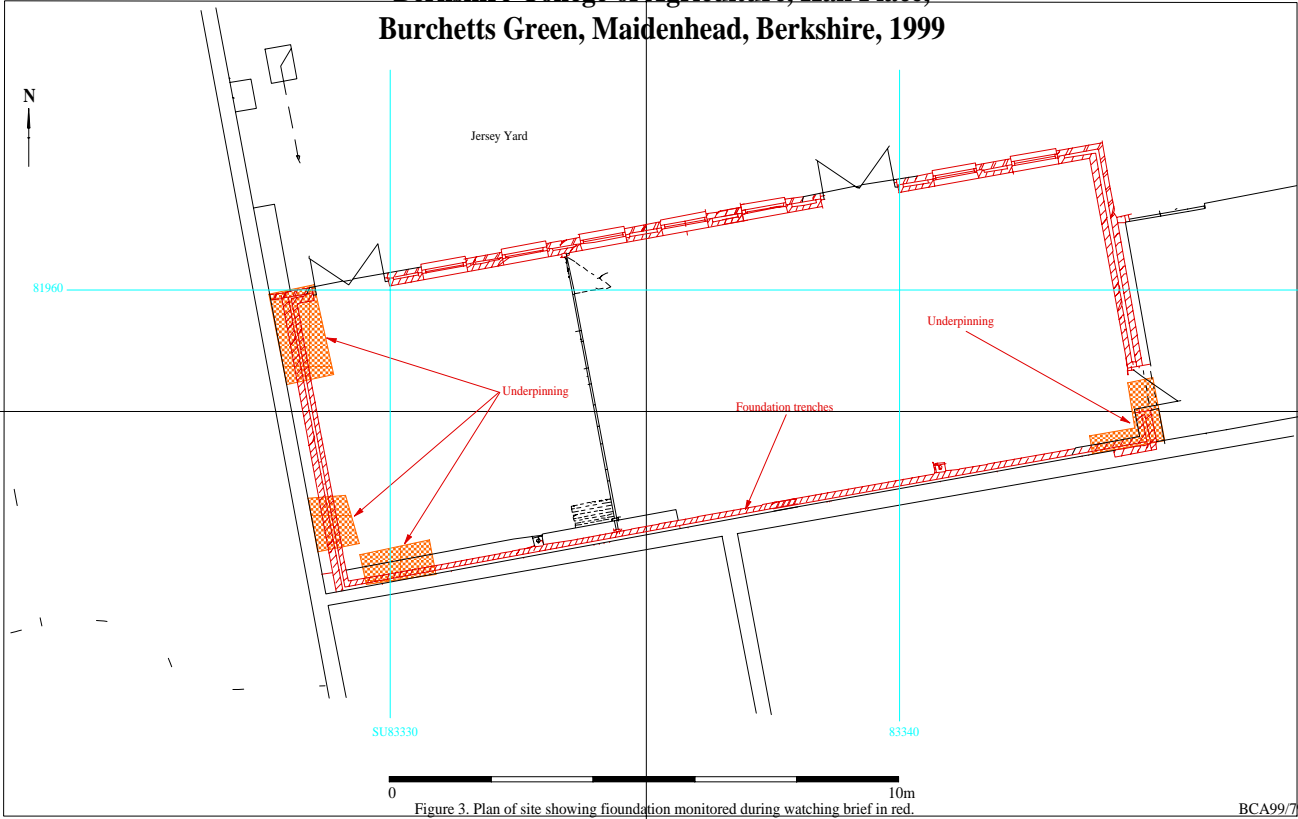


Figure 3. Plan of site showing foundation monitored during watching brief in red.