

**Land adjacent to 1 Rectory Cottages,
Church Hill, Wickham, West Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Newbury Building Partnership**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CHW 04/43

May 2004

Summary

Site name: Land adjacent to 1 Rectory Cottages, Church Hill, Wickham, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 3955 7165

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 11th May 2004

Project manager: Jo Pine

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: CHW 04/43

Area of site: c.450sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits or finds were observed

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum in due course.

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 13.05.04
	Steve Preston✓ 12.05.04

Land adjacent to 1 Rectory Cottages, Church Hill, Wickham, West Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 04/43

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at land adjacent to 1 Rectory Cottages, Church Hill, Wickham, West Berkshire (SU 3955 7165) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Duncan Wheeler of Newbury Building Partnership, Greyladies House, East Compton, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 6RE.

Planning permission (0202650/4) has been granted by West Berkshire Council for the construction of a new house and garage on the site. This is subject to a condition of archaeological work in the form of a field evaluation.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Mike Lang Hall, acting Archaeological Officer with West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Danielle Colls on the 11th May 2004 and the site code is CHW 04/43. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site comprises an irregular parcel of land, sloping gradually to the east and is located on the east side of Church Hill, Wickham, West Berkshire and to the south of the River Lambourn. The underlying geology is the Reading Beds (BGS 1971), a mottled clay, which was observed in all trenches, and sand, and the site lies at a height of c.150m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The site lies close to Ermin Street, the Roman Road between Silchester and Cirencester (Margary's route 41; Margary 1973, 120–2). The place name 'Wickham' is of Saxon origin, but often indicates the presence of an existing Roman settlement (Cameron 1996, 42). There are a number of Roman pottery finds, coin finds and a

building from the area and it is clear that a Roman settlement is present in the vicinity. The site also lies within the historic medieval core of the village, being relatively close to the parish church (Richards 1978).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. Specific aims of the project were;

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

Three trenches were excavated using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision (Fig. 2). All spoilheaps were monitored for finds

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

Trench 1 (Plate 1, Fig. 3)

This trench was aligned north-west - south-east and was 7.75m in length. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil, 0.16m deep, which contained occasional fragments of post-medieval brick and tile, overlying a grey brown subsoil which was 0.35m deep. This in turn was overlying a mottled grey orange clay natural.

Trench 2 (Plate 2)

This trench was aligned north-west - south-east and was 5.41m in length. It contained a deeper topsoil, 0.80m thick, directly overlying a mottled grey orange clay natural. This contained frequent large sub-angular flint nodules.

Trench 3

This trench was 5.20m in length and aligned NNW-SSE. The sections showed topsoil, 0.20m deep, overlying a grey brown subsoil, 0.23m deep, overlying clay natural. This again contained flint nodules as observed in Trench 2.

Finds

Post medieval brick and tile were observed in the topsoil but not retained. No finds of archaeological interest were recorded or retrieved.

Conclusion

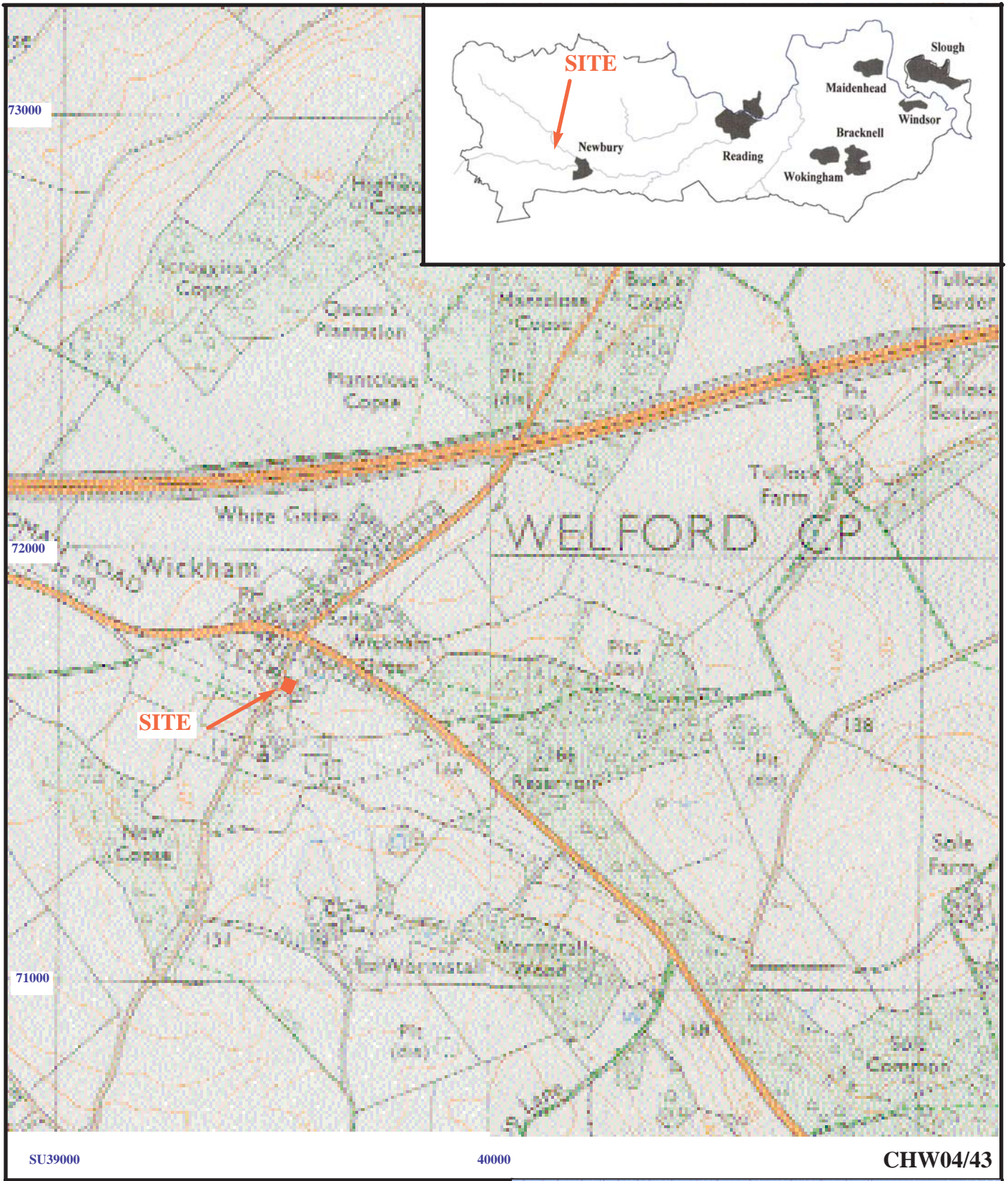
None of the three trenches dug produced any archaeological finds or deposits despite the location of the site within an area which has produced a wealth of finds. An adjacent property has produced a large number of pottery and coin finds from both the Roman and medieval periods and it is evident that there are archaeological deposits located within the vicinity of the site. However, the evaluation has clearly shown that none are present on the proposal site itself and therefore it is unlikely that any archaeological deposits will be disturbed by the development.

References

- BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 267, Drift Edition, Keyworth
Cameron, K, 1996, *English Place Names*, London
Margary, I D, 1973, *Roman Roads in Britain* (3rd Edition), London
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
Richards, J C, 1978, *The Archaeology of the Berkshire Downs*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm no 3, Reading

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at S or W end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	7.75	1.60	0.60 (SE) 1.00 (NW)	0.00m-0.16m topsoil; 0.16m-0.51m subsoil; 0.51m-0.60m+ clay natural. [Plate 1]
2	5.40	1.60	0.90 (SE) 1.10 (NW)	0.00m-0.80m topsoil; 0.80m-0.90m+ clay natural. [Plate 2]
3	5.20	1.60	0.50 (SE) 1.00 (NW)	0.00m-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.43m subsoil; 0.43m-0.50m+ clay natural.



**1 Rectory Cottages, Church Hill,
Wickham, West Berkshire, 2004**

Figure 1. Location of site within Wickham and Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1170 and 1171
SU27/37 and SU47/57 at 1:25000.
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
 SERVICES

CHW04/43

1 Rectory Cottages, Church Hill, Wickham, West Berkshire, 2004



Figure 2: Location of Trenches

1 Rectory Cottages, Church Hill, Wickham, West Berkshire, 2004

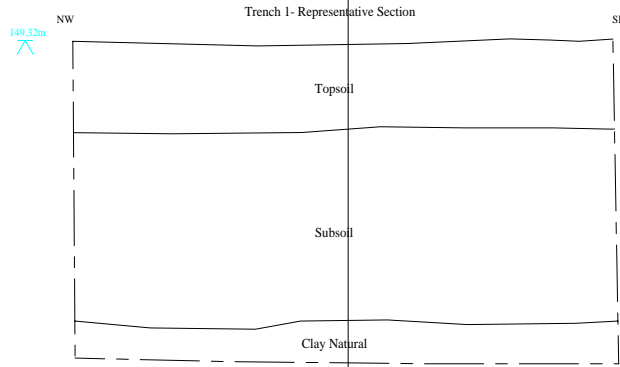


Figure3: Representative Section



Plate 1. Trench 1 looking south east, scales: 1m and 2m.



Plate 2. Trench 2 looking south east, scales: 1m and 2m.