

**Land to the rear of 11 Elm Road, Earley,  
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Charlesgate Homes Limited**

by Danielle Millbank

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code ERR 07/165

January 2008

## Summary

**Site name:** Rear of 11 Elm Road, Earley, Reading, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 7342 7058

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 19th – 20th December 2007

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Danielle Milbank

**Site code:** ERR 07/165

**Area of site:** 100 sq m

**Summary of results:** No archaeological deposits or artefacts were found

**Monuments identified:** none

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 10.01.08 Steve Preston ✓ 10.01.08
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# Land to the rear of 11 Elm Road, Earley, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Danielle Milbank

Report 07/165

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on land to the rear of 11 Elm Road, Earley, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7342 7058) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Joe Atkinson, Charlesgate Homes Limited, 120 All Saints Avenue, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 6LT.

Planning consent (07/01171/FUL) has been granted by Reading Borough Council to build two new semi-detached houses on land to the rear of 11 Elm Road, Reading. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and Reading Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary O'Donoghue of Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Council on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Danielle Milbank on 19th and 20th December 2007, and the site code is ERR 07/165.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located in Earley, southeast of the centre of Reading (Fig. 1). It is situated on an area of high ground and to the east, west and south it is surrounded by domestic houses (Fig. 2). To the north of the site is an area of open ground within which is a wood and Leighton Park School. The site is mapped as being located on Plateau Gravel (BGS 1946) close to an area of London Clay, at 80m above Ordnance Datum; the natural geology observed on site was mottled orange clay.

## Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within an area where a number of prehistoric and Roman finds have been recovered. To the northwest archaeological evaluations have revealed evidence for Roman occupation, a medieval ditch and a number of undated postholes (Ford and Pine 1998; Milbank 2007).

Further to the west is an unexplained monument known in the archaeological literature as Marshall's Hill. This is possibly a Late Bronze Age ringfort (Bradley 1984).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work. This was to involve the examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular the digging of foundation trenches and services.

## **Results**

The foundation trenches were excavated in two stages due to the limited space available on site. All trenches were 0.60m wide and were excavated with a tracked machine, and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

The trenches to the north-east and south-east were initially 1m deep. The stratigraphy observed in section at the north-west side of the footings consisted of topsoil 0.25m thick on average, which overlay grey clay silt subsoil. This in turn overlay the natural geology, which comprised mottled grey/orange clay.

The topsoil was not consistent in the central area of the footings as the ground had been reduced by c.0.20m by machine as it was waterlogged, and subsequently backfilled with stored topsoil. In these areas, a layer of topsoil mixed with imported topsoil and some subsoil which was 0.25m thick directly overlay the clay geology.

Due to the presence of trees adjacent to the south-west boundary of the site, the foundation trenches were excavated deeper, stepping down the base of the trench from the south-east to the south-west, with the footings along the south-west side dug to 1.5m deep. The stratigraphy here comprised topsoil 0.25m thick which overlay grey clay silt subsoil 0.05m thick. This in turn overlay the mottled grey orange clay which represents the underlying geology of the area.

No archaeological deposits or features were encountered.

## **Finds**

No artefacts were found during the watching brief.

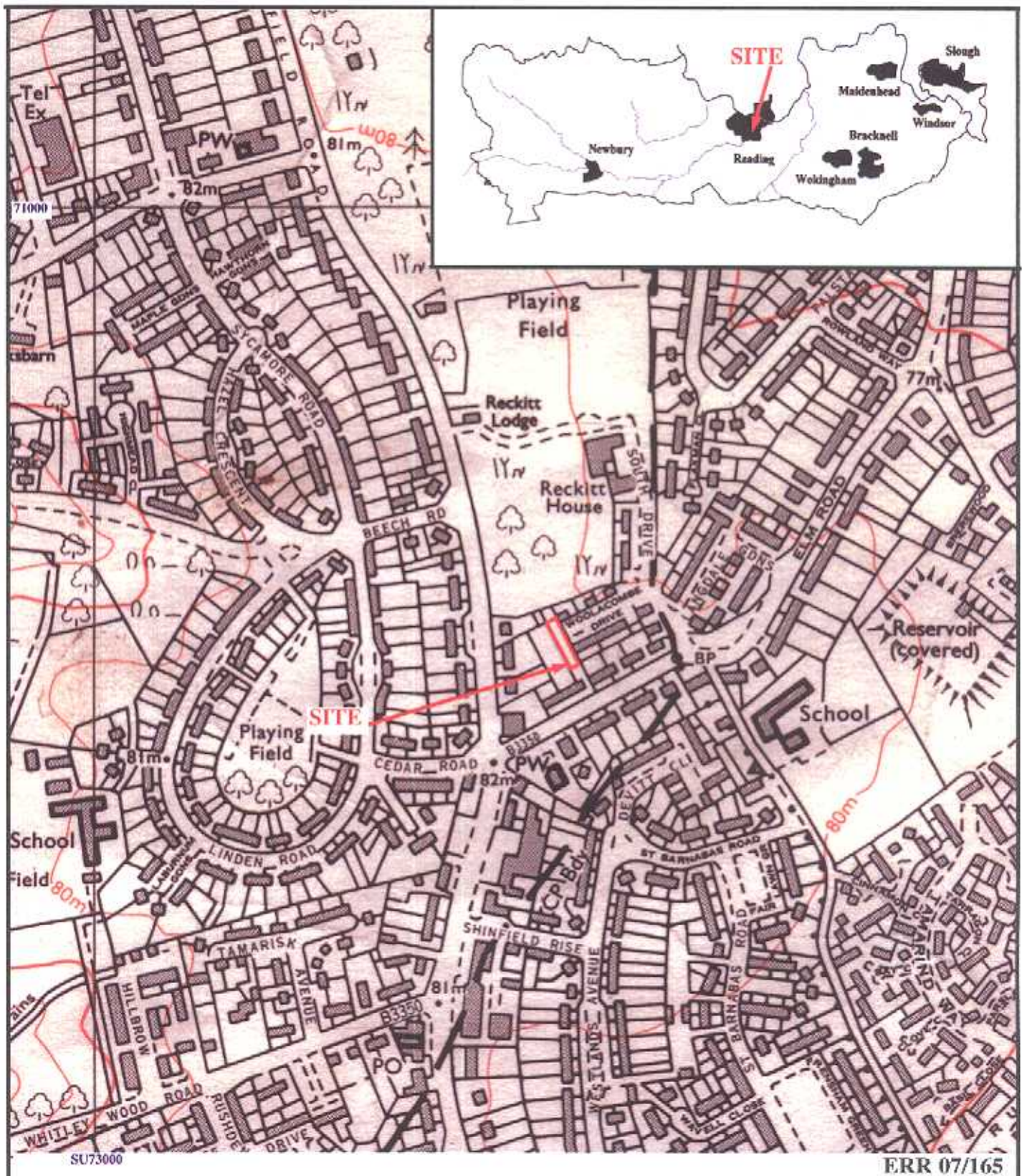
## **Conclusion**

Despite the potential of the site to contain archaeological deposits, particular of Iron Age or Roman date, none were encountered. The subsoil and underlying clay geology were undisturbed across the site and no modern

truncations were noted. This would have provided ideal conditions for archaeological features to be identified if any had been present.

### **References**

- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63,360, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Bradley, R J, 1984, *The social foundations of prehistoric Britain*, London
- Ford, A and Pine, J, 1998, 'Land to the rear of 74 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 98/15, Reading
- Milbank, D, 2007, '68-72 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, Berkshire an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 07/93, Reading
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO



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Archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Reading  
and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Elm Road.

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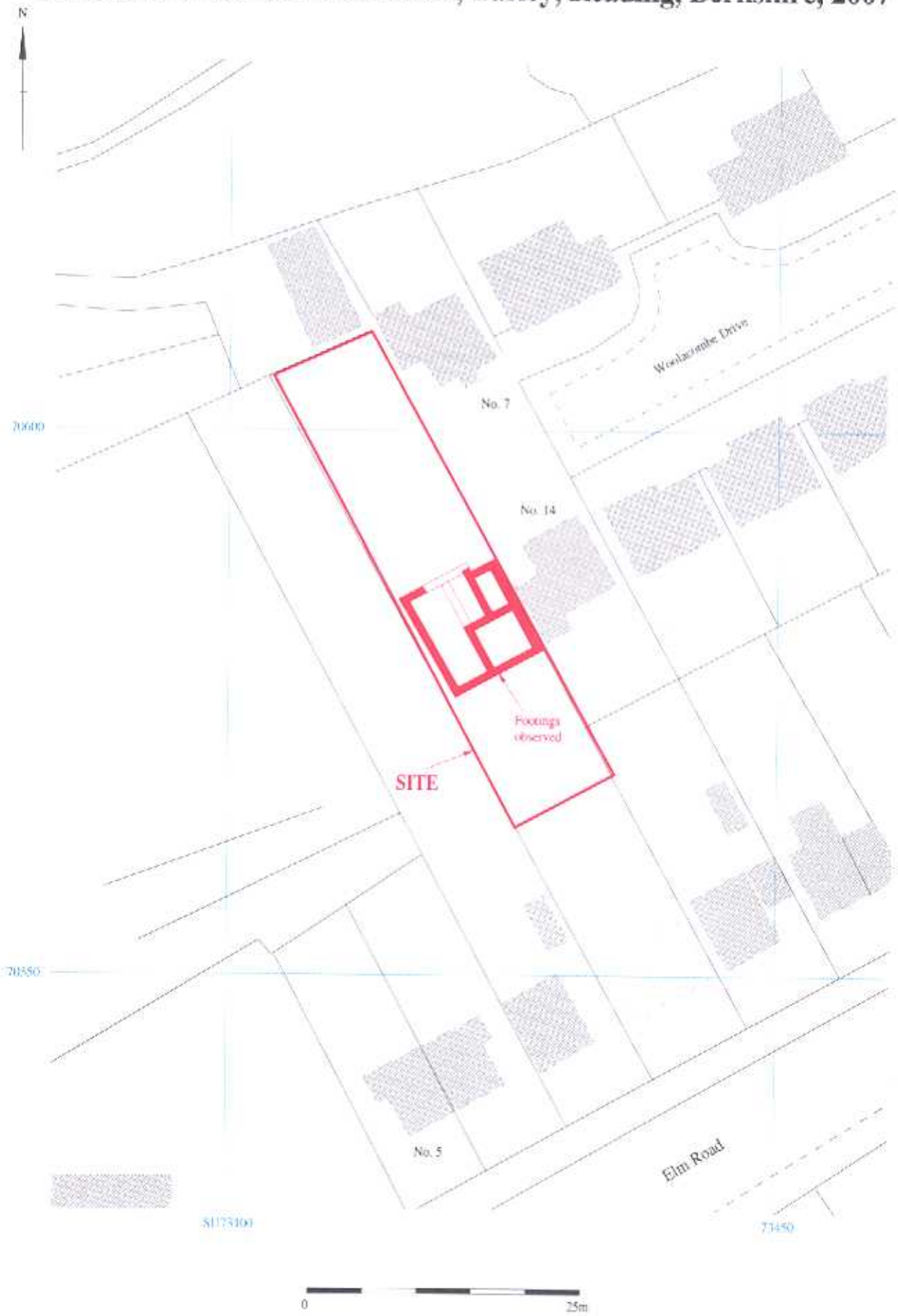


Figure 3. Detail of areas observed during watching brief.



# Land to the rear of 11 Elm Road, Earley, Reading, Berkshire, 2007

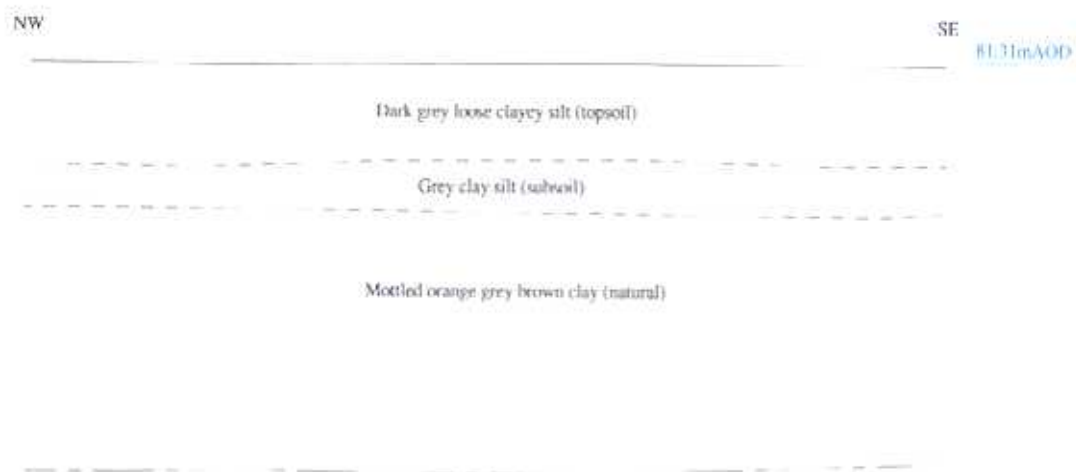


Figure 4. Representative section