

Kilbees Farm, Hatchet Lane,
Winkfield, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Berkeley Group Plc

by Steve Ford
Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Site Code KFW99/30

June 2000

Summary

Site name: Kilbees Farm, Hatchet Lane, Winkfield, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9235 7195

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date of project: 19th May-1st November 1999

Site code: KFW99/30

Area of site: c. 1.5 hectares

Monuments identified: None.

Summary of results: Examination of areas stripped for building and digging of foundation trenches did not reveal any features or finds. All of the areas revealed modern made ground overlying the natural geology (London Clay).

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

Kilbees Farm, Hatchet Lane, Winkfield, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report 99/30

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Kilbees Farm, Hatchet Lane, Winkfield, Berkshire (SU 9235 7195) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Simon Collins of Berkeley Group PLC, Berkeley House, 19 Portsmouth Road, Cobham, Surrey, KT11 1JG. Bracknell Forest Borough Council has approved various planning applications (eg 624556) for the refurbishment of the farm and the erection of new stable blocks, garage and ancillary structures. Not all of the approved planning applications were implemented.

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, a programme of archaeological work was requested in the form of a watching brief. The specifications relating to the various planning applications were approved by Mr R Bourn, Senior Archaeologist of Babcoc Group, who advised the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The watching brief was undertaken by Steve Ford and M John Saunders on 19th May, 11th, 17th and 21st June and 1st November 1999. The site code is KFW99/30.

Location, Topography and Geology

The site lies 1.5km to the east of Winkfield and 1km south of Cranbourne, East Berkshire. The farm is accessed off the western side of Hatchet Lane and lies about 100m from the road (Figs 1 and 2). It comprises a complex of former farm buildings, several of which have been recently demolished, and occupies an area of c. 1.5 hectares. It lies at a height of c. 68m above Ordnance Datum on ground that is more or less level. According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 1981) the underlying geology is London Clay.

Archaeological Background

Kilbees Farm is a listed building with parts of the structure having 16th century origins. In the Medieval period the claylands of east Berkshire were a region which came under the legal restrictions relating to Windsor Forest. Dispersed settlement is more prevalent than the nucleated villages typical of the English Midlands (Ford 1987).

It is thought possible that the farm lies on the site of an earlier Medieval farm which reflects this dispersed settlement pattern.

Objectives and Methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to observe, excavate and record all archaeological deposits within areas of ground disturbance associated with the construction of the new buildings and associated services. This was achieved by the observation of areas of ground disturbance associated with the removal of topsoil and overburden and the excavation of foundation and service trenches.

Results

Several areas of the site were examined. The breaking out of an area of concrete and hard standing was observed in the farmyard to the north-east of the house (Fig. 3; A). Beneath the concrete was a layer of made ground but the depth of the excavations was too shallow to reveal undisturbed natural geology. No archaeological finds or deposits were observed.

Three small and shallow inspection holes (Fig. 3; C, D and E) were observed adjacent to two structures. The holes were 0.5m square and 0.3-0.5m deep. The natural clay was revealed but no archaeological finds or deposits were observed.

More invasive trenching took place for a new garage block (Fig. 3; F). Foundation trenches 0.7m wide were dug down to depths of up to 1.9m in the vicinity of a sewer which crossed the footprint of the building, but 0.6-0.9m deep elsewhere. Several sections of the foundation trenches revealed made ground overlying the natural London Clay as a dumped deposit, with little or no truncation apart from the removal of topsoil. Other parts, however, were severely disturbed or truncated. No archaeological finds or deposits were observed.

The footprint area of a new barn (Fig. 3; H) was stripped of concrete and some made ground but not sufficiently deep enough to expose the natural bedrock. This structure was of a lightweight design with open walls and the supports resting upon the new ground slab. Hence no foundation trenches were dug. No archaeological finds or deposits were observed. An extension on the south-eastern side of an existing stable block (Fig. 3; G) also involved the use of a lightweight design which utilised the existing concrete slab without necessitating the digging of new foundation trenches.

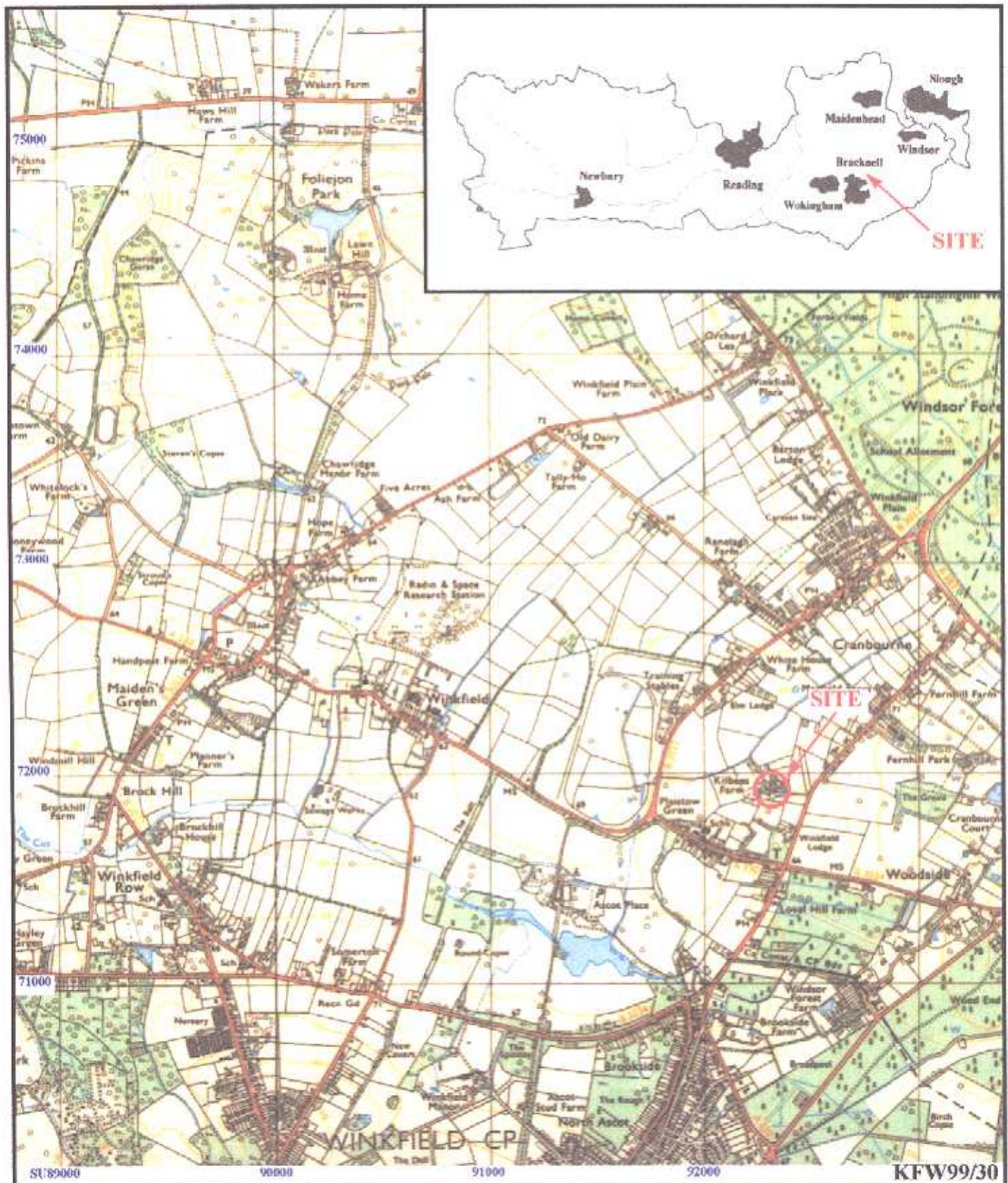
Although not a part of the planning permission requirements, the sides of a recently cleaned out drainage ditch (B) to the north-east of the farmyard complex was examined for a length of 30m. This revealed topsoil overlying natural London Clay but again no archaeological finds or deposits were observed.

Conclusion

The watching brief did not locate any archaeological deposits on the site and no finds pre-dating the modern period were observed. Although there was no ground disturbance observed close to the listed farmhouse, the lack of any finds of Medieval date, even as residual finds in modern disturbed contexts, casts doubt on the suggested presence of a Medieval precursor to the farm.

References

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 269, Solid and 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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Figure 1. Location of site within Winkfield and
Berkshire.

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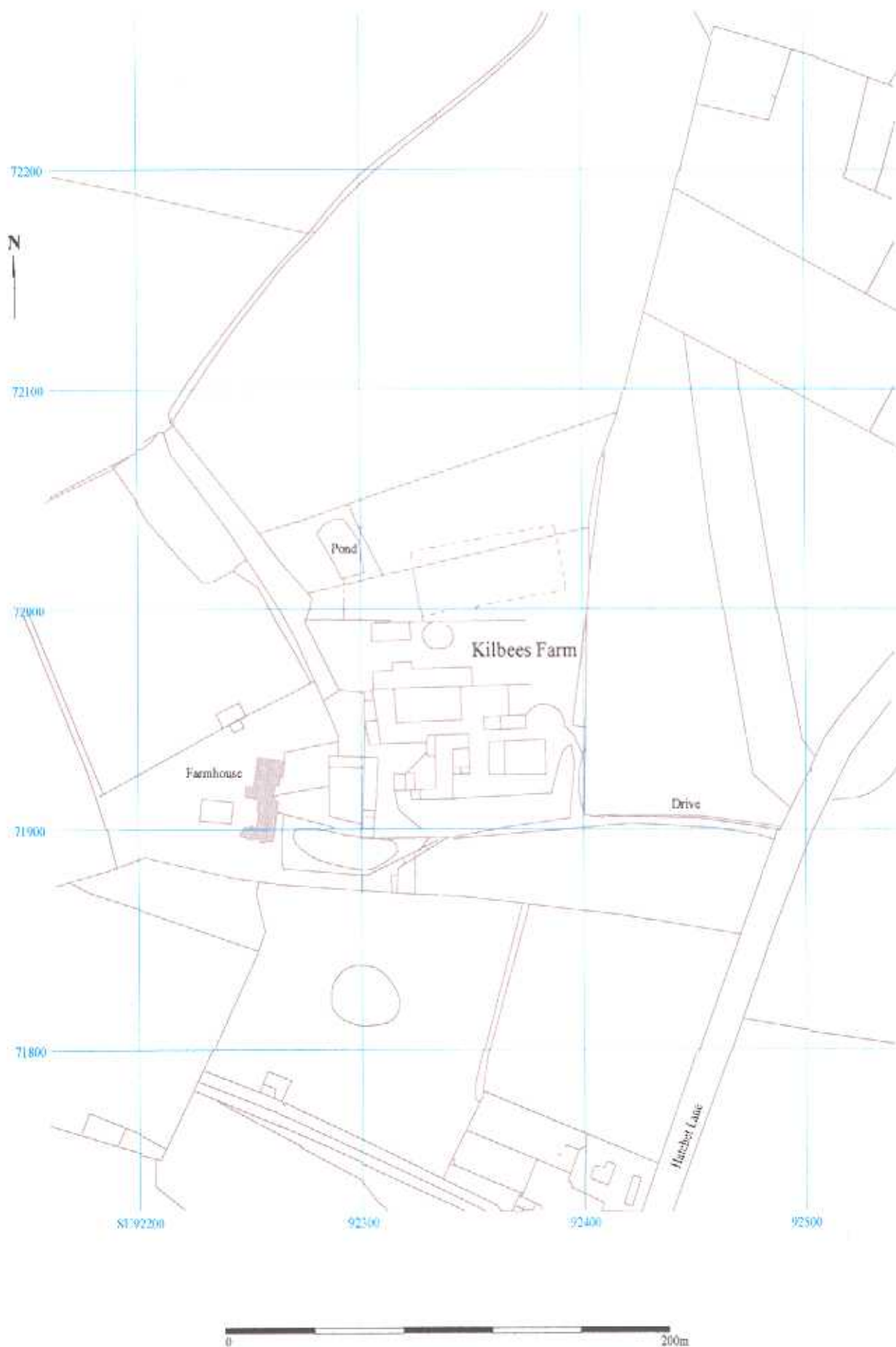


Figure 2. Location of site.

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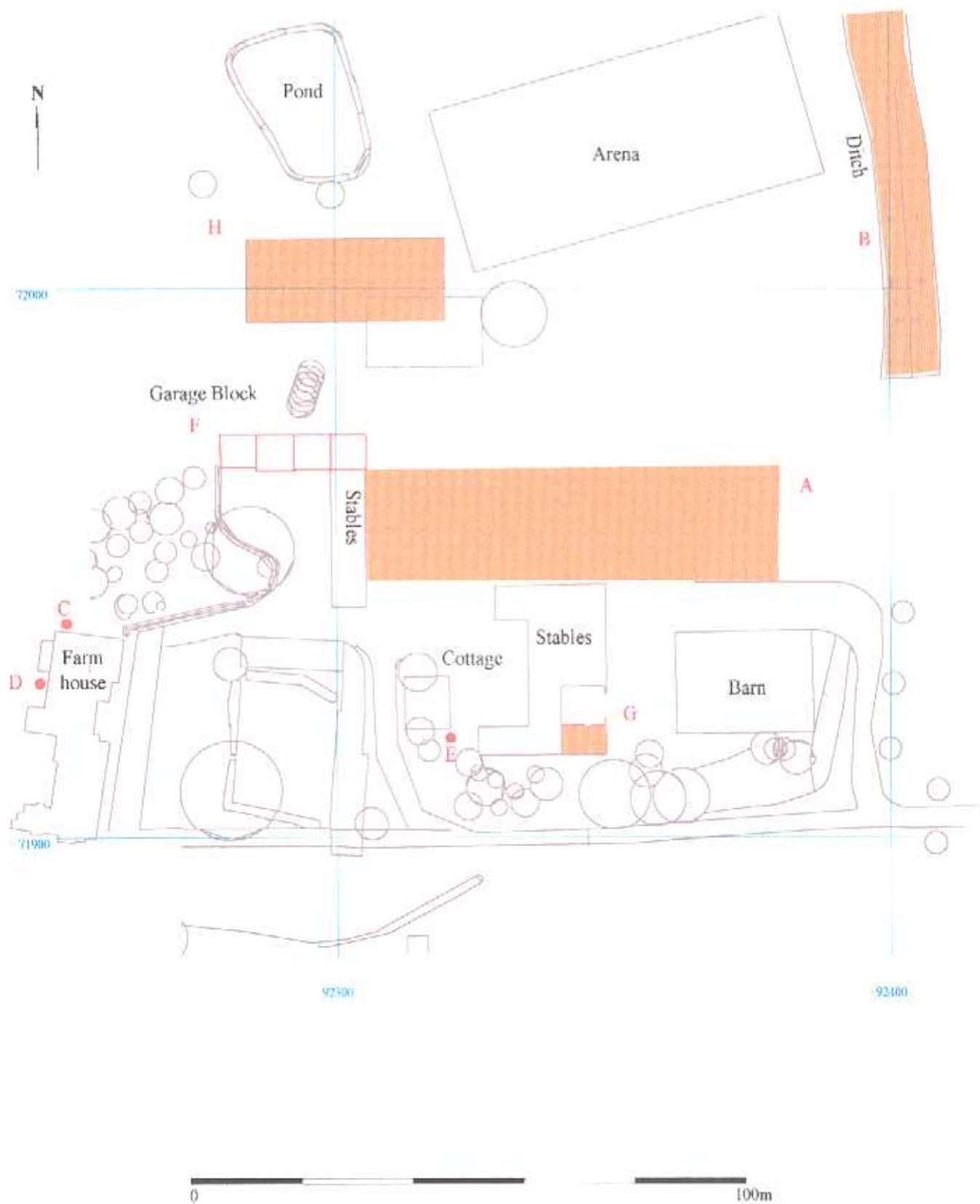


Figure 3. Location of Watching Brief areas