

**Thirlstone House, 16 Shute End,
Wokingham, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for M.H. Character Homes Ltd**

by Andy Taylor
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SEW 05/84

August 2005

Summary

Site name: Thirlstone House, 16 Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire, 2005

Grid reference: SU 8090 6871

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 18th August 2005

Project manager: Helen Moore

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: SEW 05/84

Area of site: c.1250 sq 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 Reading Museum in due course.

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Thirlstone House, 16 Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire, 2005 An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 05/84

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Thirlstone House, 16 Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU 8090 6871) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sharon Hulbert of M.H. Character Homes Ltd, Hunters Lodge, Fenns Lane, West End, Woking, Surrey GU24 9QF.

A planning consent has been granted by Wokingham District Council to erect a rear extension to Thirlstone House, which will form two additional residential units. Alterations to existing buildings including a stable block, are also for further residential units. New railings on the street frontage are also to be installed. This consent was subject a condition relating to archaeology which initially required a watching brief to take place during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Thomason, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Katie Keefe on the 18th August 2005 and the site code is SEW 05/84. 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 on the south side of Shute End to the west of the village of Wokingham, which itself lies around 4km east of Reading (Fig. 1). The site is a rectangular parcel of land and is relatively flat with the existing Thirlstone House on the northern side with the stable blocks on the western side (Fig. 2). The underlying geology consists of Lower Bagshot Beds (BGS 1971), although sand was observed in the trenches, and the site lies at a height of c. 68.50m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the fringes of the historic (medieval) core of Wokingham, but within an area occupied since early post-medieval times (Astill 1978, fig. 29). Several of the

buildings in adjacent areas are listed and of early post-medieval origin. Thirlstone House itself is a listed building. Wokingham is a Saxon place name and it is possible the settlement has late Saxon origins, although it does not appear in Domesday Book and there is no certain reference to it before *c.* AD 1146. As yet no archaeological remains as early as the Saxon period have been located. The town may have been a planned settlement by the Bishop of Salisbury in the 12th century (Astill 1978, 101).

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.

The project was originally designed as a watching brief with the aim of excavating and recording any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction works. This was to involve examination of all areas of topsoil stripping, landscaping, ground reduction and the digging of trenches for foundations and services for structures.

However, the new foundations and service runs were inadvertently constructed without archaeological observation and so it was deemed necessary for three evaluation trenches to be dug to ascertain if archaeological deposits survive on the site.

The trenches were situated as close as possible to their intended positions although the presence of live services and access problems resulted in a slight shift in their position (Fig. 2), agreed in consultation with the monitor. The trenches were excavated using a mini 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision and 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)

This trench consisted of brick paving overlying sand over hoggin, above brick rubble made ground overlying a mid grey silty clay containing brick and tile fragments over a yellowey brown clayey sand overlying sand natural (Fig. 3). No archaeological deposits were observed.

Trench 2 (Plate 2)

This trench consisted of brick paving overlying sand over brick rubble made ground above a mid grey clayey sand overlying sand natural. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Trench 3

Trench 3 contained brick paving overlying sand overlying brick rubble made ground overlying natural sand. The sand was only observed along the eastern edge of the trench with the remainder having been truncated by previously unknown services. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Finds

No finds of an archaeological nature were retrieved.

Conclusion

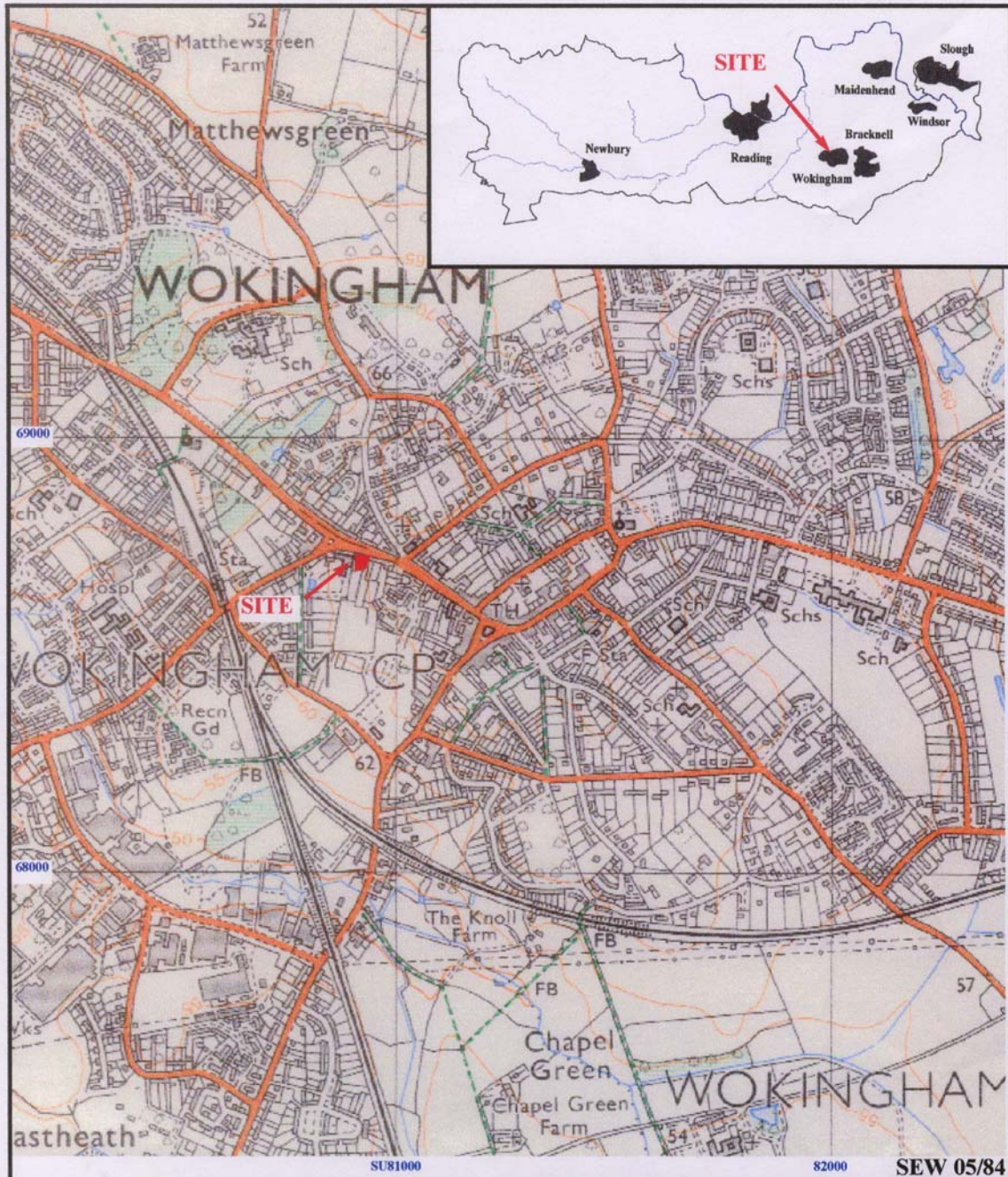
The trenches opened did not reveal any archaeological deposits or finds although it cannot be ruled out that any were affected during the building works which were carried out before any archaeological work could be done. However as nothing was identified outside the building it seems less likely that archaeology was present on the site, especially as existing services had already truncated large areas.

References

- Astill, G G, 1978, *Historic towns in Berkshire; an archaeological appraisal*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 2
Reading
BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
 0m at S end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	2.00	1.50	1.26	0.00m-0.07m Brick Paving; 0.07m-0.15m sand; 0.15m-0.28m hoggin; 0.28m-0.50m brick rubble made ground; 0.50m-1.07m mid grey silty clay containing brick and tile fragments; 1.07m-1.24m yellowey brown clayey sand; 1.24m-1.26m+ sand natural. [Plate 1]
2	2.00	1.50	0.72	0.00m-0.07m brick paving; 0.07m-0.13m sand; 0.13m-0.42m brick rubble made ground; 0.42m-0.68m mid grey clayey sand; 0.68m-0.72m+ sand natural. [Plate 2]
3	2.10	1.50	0.68	0.00m-0.07m brick paving; 0.07m-0.14m sand; 0.14m-0.68m brick rubble made ground; 0.68m+ natural sand at eastern edge.



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Berkshire, 2005
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Wokingham
and Berkshire.

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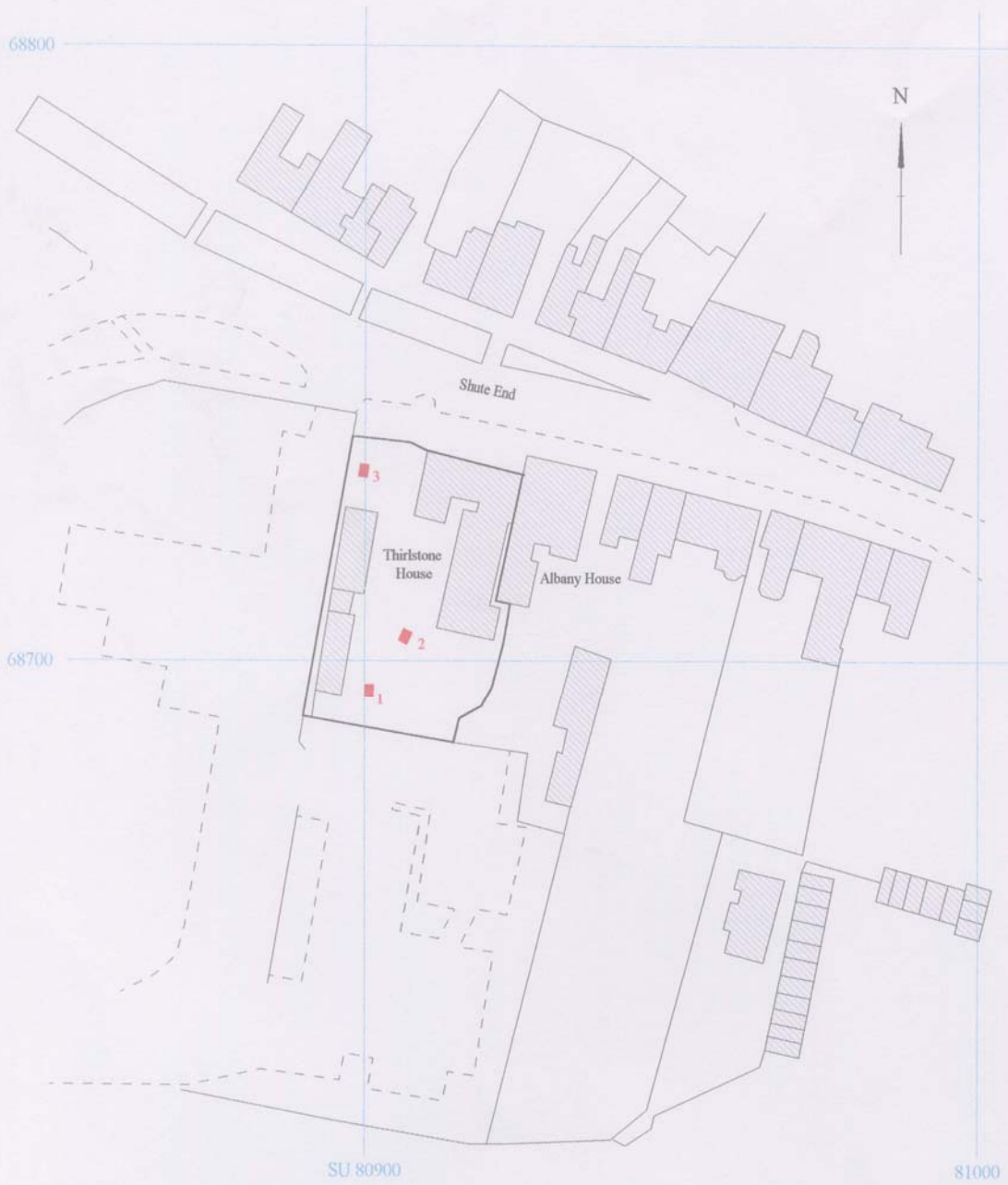


Figure 2: Site Location

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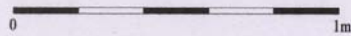
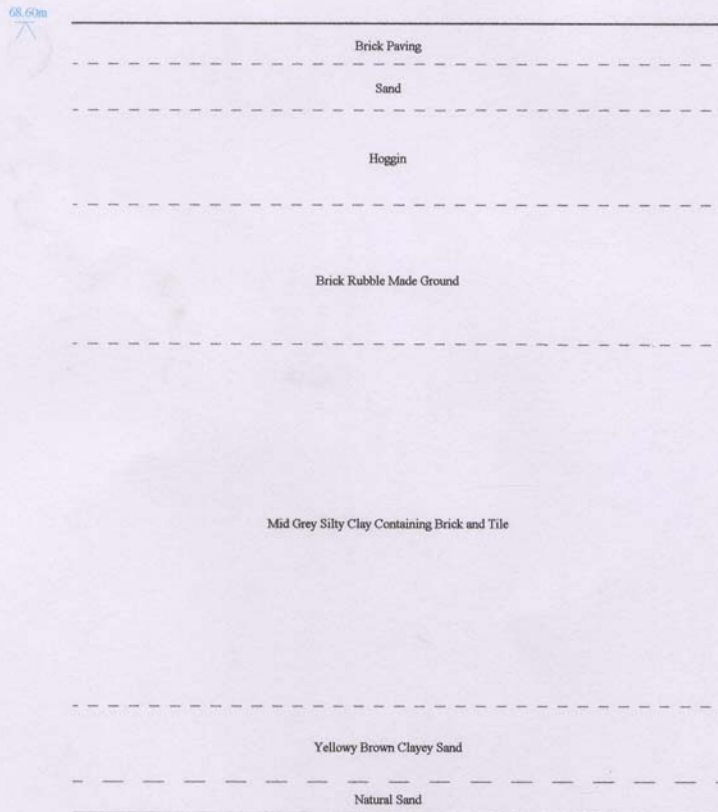


Figure 3: Representative Section; Trench 1

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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north east, scales 0.5m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking south-west, scales 0.5m and 1m.