

**Land at the Rectory,
Wiltshire Road, Wokingham**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for

Millgate Homes

December 1997

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An Archaeological Evaluation**

by **Graham Hull**

Report 97/83

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at the Rectory, Wiltshire Road, Wokingham (NGR SU 815 689) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr. N. Jackson of Millgate Homes, The Studio, Broad Street Walk, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1BW. A proposal for the construction of a new block of flats has been submitted to Wokingham District Council (App. No. 97/65192/F). A scheme of archaeological works was requested by Mr. P. Fasham, Principal Archaeologist, Babtie Group Ltd. and archaeological advisor to Berkshire County Council. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note, **Archaeology and Planning** (PPG 16, 1990), Policy EN6 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006 and Policy LBE 22 of the Loddon Area Local Plan. The brief prepared by Babtie required a single component for the project, namely machine trenching. The fieldwork was supervised by Graham Hull, with the assistance of Keith Cooper and Leigh Pollinger, during November 1997. The site code is WRW97/83.

Location, Topography and Geology

The site is centrally located in Wokingham, within the grounds of a derelict early 20th century rectory, c. 70 m. west of All Saints Church and on the east side of Wiltshire Road (Fig. 2). The site slopes gently down from south to north, and is c. 61 m. above OD. At the time of the

evaluation the site was an overgrown garden. The British Geological Survey (1971) shows the underlying geology to be Lower Bagshot Beds and Plateau Gravel.

Archaeological Background

The site lies near to the original 12th century chapel of All Saints which has been identified by Astill (1978) as being part of the town occupied in the late Saxon/early Medieval period. Excavations in Cross Street, c. 200 m. south-west of the site, were carried out by the Berkshire Archaeological Unit in 1974-5 (Morris and Jones 1991). These identified construction phases of a building from the 15th to 17th centuries. The earliest material in the collection could date to the late 14th century.

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. This was achieved by machine excavation of three trenches. Two trenches were located within the footprint of the proposed building and the third was targeted on the route of the access road (Fig. 2). Topsoil and modern over-burden was removed by a JCB-type machine, fitted with a toothless grading bucket, under direct and continuous archaeological supervision. The spoil was monitored for finds.

A full written, drawn and photographic record of the fieldwork was made. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

The trenches were between 0.2 m. and 0.4 m. deep and all were 20 m. long. A thin topsoil was observed to overlie a make-up layer of redeposited natural in Trenches 1 and 3. The topsoil directly overlay the natural in Trench 2. The natural drift geology in the trenches was an orange brown clay. It was apparent that considerable disturbance had occurred on the site, probably at the time of the construction of the present building. A sunken garden had been dug to the south of the rectory and the natural clays were also truncated on the west and north sides of the building. No archaeological features were observed in the trenches and no finds were recovered from the spoil.

Conclusion

The field evaluation on the land around the rectory has established that no archaeological deposits survive. It is very likely that any such deposits would have been destroyed during the construction of the present rectory in the early 20th century and by subsequent garden landscaping.

References

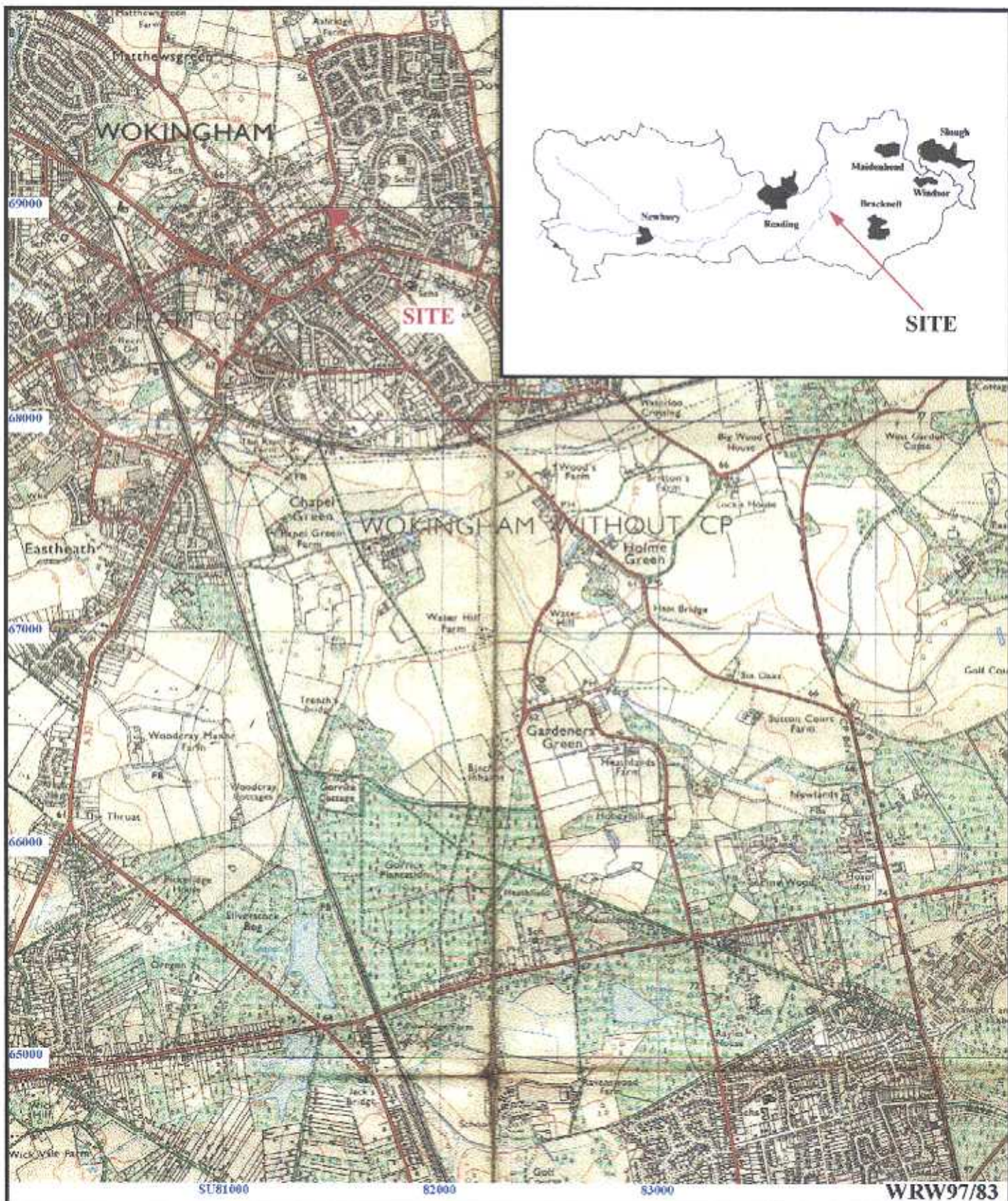
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- MORRIS, E. and JONES, N. 1991: Excavations at Cross Street, Wokingham, 1974-5. **Berks. Archaeol. Journ.** Vol. 73, 104-115. Reading.
- PPG 16, 1990: **Archaeology and Planning.** Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16. (HMSO)

APPENDIX 1: Trench Details

All trenches were 1.6 m. wide.

0 m. is to the south or west unless otherwise stated.

Trench No.	Length (m.)	Depth (m.)	Comments
1	20	0.4	Topsoil 0-0.2 m. Onto disturbed subsoil onto orange/brown clay natural with extensive tree root disturbance. SE bottom 60.80 m. above OD. NW bottom 60.72 m. above OD.
2	19	0.4	Topsoil 0-0.1 m. Onto redeposited natural make-up layer onto orange/brown clay natural. S. bottom 61.33 m. above OD. N. bottom 60.91 m. above OD.
3	20	0.2	Topsoil 0-0.1/0.2 m. Onto orange/brown clay natural. W. bottom 61.03 m. above OD. E. bottom 61.69 m. above OD (bank of sunken garden).



Wiltshire Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, 1997

Figure 1. Location of site within Berkshire and Wokingham.

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Wiltshire Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, 1997

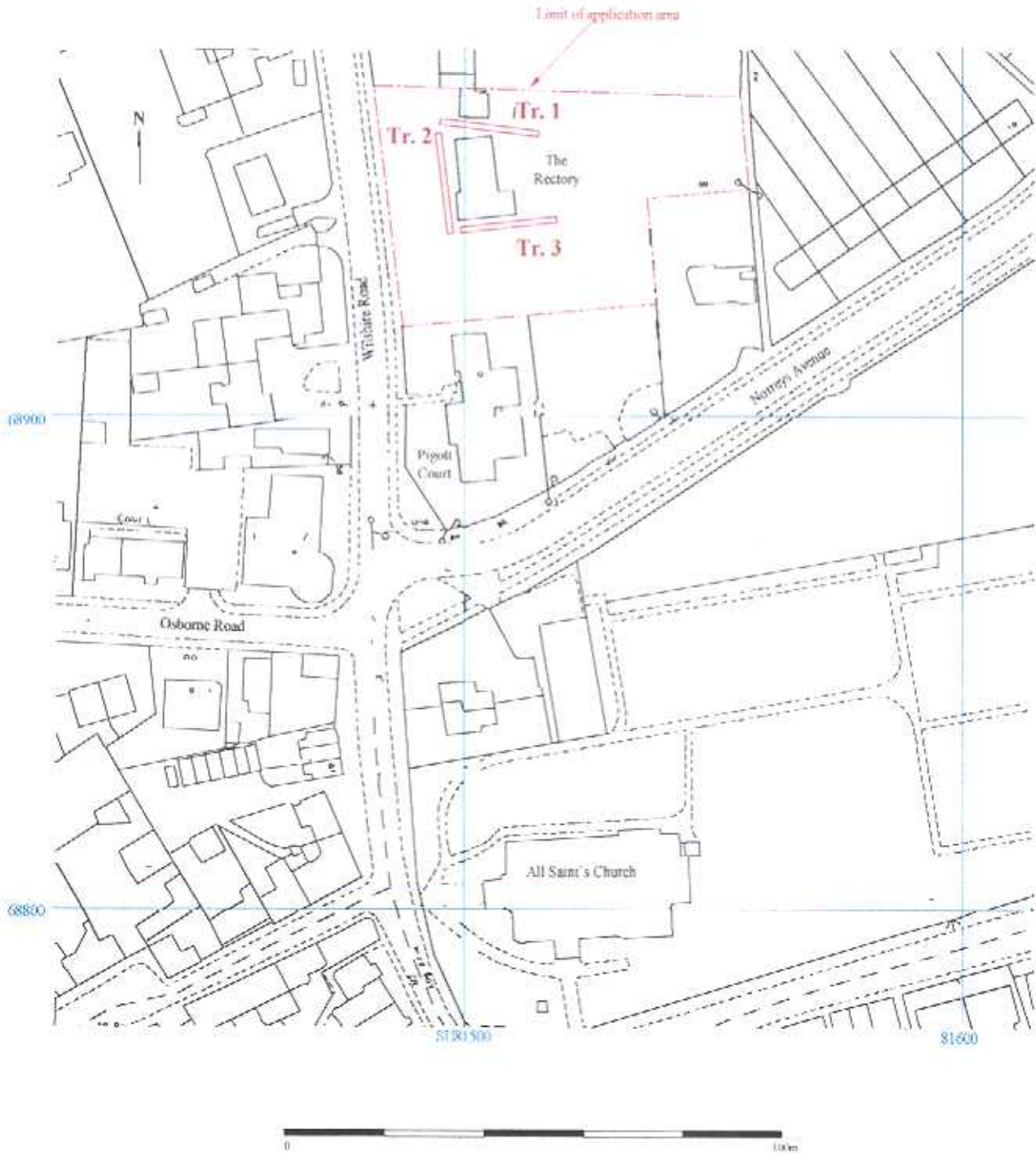


Figure 2: Trench location plan.