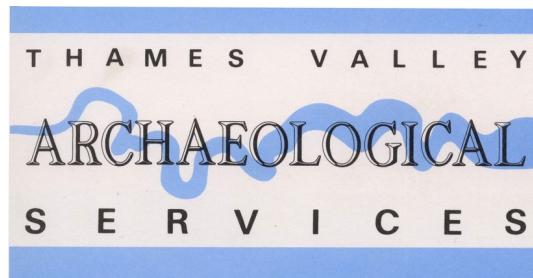


Gorse Ride South Regeneration, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire Phases 1 and 2

Project specification for an archaeological evaluation

**5th July 2021
(rev 21/7/21)**



Ref: 21e94ev

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1.0 Background

1.1 The site is located on the east side of Gorse Ride South, south of Whittle Close and north/south of Billing Avenue, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU 796 650). The site comprised an area of c. 5.2ha of which c. 4.6ha is to be re-developed with c. 0.6ha of existing open space retained.

1.2 Planning permission has been gained from Wokingham Council (202133) for the demolition of existing houses on the site followed by the construction of replacement houses. The consent is subject to a condition (32) relating to archaeology.

1.3 The archaeological potential of the site is of uncertain form with only a modest range of sites and finds recorded for the vicinity in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (Ford 1987). However, the site lies on the heathland soils of East Berkshire and whilst these are not noteworthy for prolific sites and finds, recent investigations have recorded Iron Age and Roman settlement (eg Lowe 2013) and several upstanding Bronze Age round barrows are also recorded with a large example c. 500m to the south west which is a Scheduled Monument. Both in the valley of the river Blackwater to the south and in the wider environs of the site, a number of Iron Age iron production sites are recorded (eg; Hardy et al 2019; Pine 2003; Platt 2013) with a number of un-excavated iron production sites represented by small slagheaps (Ford 1987, fig. 38).

2.0 Requirement for Work

2.1 As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site, a field evaluation has been requested by Wokingham Council as advised by Berkshire Archaeology and as detailed in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and Wokingham Council policies on archaeology.

2.2 A single component of work is proposed- a field evaluation by means of machine-dug trenching. The results of this evaluation will determine if further phases of fieldwork are required in relation to this development. Should further works be necessary an additional WSI will be required.

2.3 Where appropriate and relevant, the recommendations in the 'Berkshire Archaeology general standards for archaeological fieldwork projects (April 2019)' will be followed.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

3.1 The aims of the evaluation will be to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.

3.2 This work will be carried out in a manner which will not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

3.3 The specific research aims of this project are;

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- c) To determine if there are any deposits of Prehistoric date on the site.
- d) To determine if there are any Iron Age or Roman iron production sites on the site.
- e) The potential and significance of any such deposits located will be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in *Historic England Research Agenda* (HE 2017) or any more local or thematic research priorities such as the Solent Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014) as necessary.

4.0 Methodology

4.1.1 We propose to dig 36 trenches, 20m long and between 1.8 and 2m wide across the site, as shown on Figure 1. The trench positions are indicative only and may need to be moved or subdivided to avoid obstacles or services.

4.2 A contingency of 40m of trench is included within the proposal should this be required to clarify the results of the initial trenching.

4.3 Excavation Methodology

4.3.1 Topsoil and other overburden for the machine-dug trenches will be removed by a 360° machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. This will take place under constant archaeological supervision.

4.3.2 Trenches will be excavated to the first archaeologically relevant horizon, or to the level of the natural geology.

4.3.3 Where archaeological features are certainly or probably present, the stripped areas will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools.

4.3.4 Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed will be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the objective set out in 3.2.

4.3.5 In general, all finds and artefacts will be retained, though all but a sample of some classes of building material will be discarded after recording.

4.3.6 Conservation on site will follow guidelines in First Aid For Finds with any other specialist conservation work subcontracted to our conservation advisor (see below).

4.3.7 A programme of environmental sampling will take place should sufficient well stratified subsoil deposits be located. Typically this involves samples of up to 40L depending on the size of the feature examined. Bulk waterlogged samples with organic preservation will be of the order of 1L. These will be sampled in consultation with our environmental consultants and the archaeological advisor to Wokingham Council. Sampling will take place according to Historic England guidance (HE 2015b).

4.3.8 Discovery of any human remains will be confirmed by minimal excavation but no further action will be taken as part of the evaluation exercise, unless requested as additional work by the client in consultation with the archaeological advisor to Wokingham Council. Human remains will be treated following the guidelines in (Mitchell and Brickley 2017).

4.3.9 Spoilheaps will be searched for finds including use of a metal detector.

4.3.10 All gold and silver, prehistoric base metal and any associated objects will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner and county finds liaison officer according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act (1996) and subsequent amendments. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft. No title will be assumed by the finder of any items of value.

4.3.11 Following completion of all excavation and recording, the trench will be efficiently backfilled but will not be resurfaced. No liability is accepted for damage to any services unless a plan of these is provided by the client.

4.4 Recording Methodology

4.4.1 A single context recording system will be used in accordance with the TVAS Field Recording Manual (8th edition 2018). Descriptions of individual deposits and features will be recorded on pro-forma context recording sheets.

4.4.2 All archaeological deposits exposed will be planned at a scale of 1:20 and sections drawn at a scale of 1:10. All site drawings will be by pencil on drafting film.

4.4.3 Heights above OD will be taken and recorded on plans and sections.

4.4.4 Where appropriate, significant finds will be recorded in 3D.

4.4.5 The locations of the trenches, and of all plans and sections will be tied into the National Grid using Korec hand held GPS machines accurate to 0.1m, or using a total station.

4.4.6 The photographic record will consist of digital image. It will record the principal features and finds discovered, both in detail and in their general context. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' and, where applicable, aerial photographs to illustrate the nature of the archaeological fieldwork programme. All feature shots will include appropriate scales and a photo board, the latter positioned in such a way that the writing is legible and including the context number and site code. Digital images are taken on Canon EOS 4000D cameras with APS-C sensors taking 16-megapixel images.

4.5 Post-fieldwork

4.5.1 Finds processing, sieving of bulk samples (including flotation and the sorting of residues) and analysis will commence immediately following the completion of the fieldwork in accordance with guidelines in MoRPHE (HE 2015a), and TVAS post-excavation procedures (6th edition 2013).

4.5.2 Artefacts will be cleaned, conserved and prepared for long term museum storage.

4.5.3 Specialist reports will be prepared on the artefacts and ecofacts recovered; particular attention will be paid to correlating the pottery recovered with local or regional fabric type sequences.

4.5.4 Specialist analysis and reporting will be carried out by the following specialist staff or consultants as appropriate:-

Project Management	Dr. Steve Ford, Ms. Joanna Pine or Mr Andy Taylor
Fieldwork Supervisor	(one of) Mr Andrew Taylor, Mr. Kyle Beaverstock, Mr. David Sanchez, Dr Steve Ford, Dr Pierre Manisse, Ms Anne Huvig, Mr. Will Attard or Ms Maisie Foster
Post excavation	Mr. Steve Preston
Finds coordination	Dr. Cristina Matteos
Pottery Specialist (from)	Dr. Jane Timby, Ms Sue Anderson, Ms Alice Lyons, Mr. Luke Barber, Dr. Alexandra Guitierrez (consultants) or Dr Richard Tabor (TVAS)
Environment (general) University)	Ms Elspeth St John -Brookes (TVAS) or Professor Mark Robinson (Oxford)
Brick and Tile	Ms. Danielle Milbank, (TVAS)
Carbonised botanical remains	Professor Mark Robinson (Oxford University) or Ms. Rossy McKenna (consultant)
Faunal remains	Dr. Matilda Holmes (consultants) or Dr Ceri Falys (TVAS)
Human remains	Dr. Ceri Falys (TVAS)
Coins	Dr. Pierre Manisse (TVAS)
Metalwork	Dr. Robin Taylor (consultant) or Mr Aidan Colyer (TVAS)
Pollen	Mr. Dan Young (Quest, Reading University)
Wood	Ms. Rossy McKenna, (consultant)
Slag	Dr. David Dungworth (consultant)
Archaeomagnetism	Bradford University

Queens University, Belfast
Wiltshire County Council Heritage Centre

5.0 Report and Dissemination

5.1 The reports on the results of the evaluation and should be available within 2 weeks of completion of the fieldwork. Provision is made to produce 2 reports if the work is to be carried out in 2 phases.

5.2 The reports will follow our established format, comprising a descriptive text, illustrations and catalogues in appendices.

5.3 The text will address the aims and objectives of the evaluation, the methodology employed, describe the basic nature of the archaeological deposits discovered, and report on the artefacts recovered. It will then attempt to place the significance of the findings in their local, regional and national setting if appropriate.

5.4 The reports will include a frontsheet providing the following information:

- *Site name
- *Grid reference
- *Site activity (eg. evaluation trenching, geophysical survey, fieldwalking, watching brief, excavation etc.)
- *Date and duration of project
- *Site code
- *Area of site
- *Summary of results
- *A selection of historic maps
- *Monuments identified (referenced to the RCHME Thesaurus of Monument Types)
- *Location and reference of archive

5.5 The illustrations will include:

- a site location plan
- a trench layout plan
- trench plans and sections
- profiles/sections of a selection of excavated features
- a selection of colour photos of significant findings

5.6 Catalogues giving descriptions of trenches, archaeological features, and artefacts will be contained in a series of appendices.

5.7 Any findings of national or special local significance will be published as a dedicated report in an appropriate journal such as *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*. Otherwise a summary will be produced for publication in 'round up' sections in publications such as period specific national journals like *Medieval Archaeology*.

5.8 Copies of the results will be supplied to Berkshire HER in digital format. Non-published report(s) will be made available for inspection or download on the TVAS web site.

6.0 Archive Deposition

6.1 The finds and site archive will be prepared in accordance with guidelines in MoRPHE (HE 2015a), CfA guidance (CfA 2020a) and after consultation with the recipient museum.

6.2 The site and finds archive will be deposited in an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority)

6.3 With the consent of the landowner, the site finds will be deposited with a local museum prepared to accept the material.

6.4 The records will be copied onto microfiche for the National Archaeological Record.

6.5 A digital version of the report will be provided to the OASIS project.

7.0 General Items

7.1 The project will be managed on a regular basis by a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (S. Ford, J. Pine or A. Taylor) with an appropriate area of competence.

7.2 The project will be carried out in accordance with the CIa Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation (2020b) and Code of Conduct (2019) and the quality control mechanisms set out in the TVAS fieldwork and post-fieldwork manuals.

7.3 Safe working practices as set out in TVAS health and safety manual will be adopted and current health and safety regulations will be adhered to. If the site is accessible to the public, the trenches will be fenced with barrier mesh/bunting and road pins or Heras fencing as necessary.

7.4 Our insurance cover comprises £10 million for public liability, £10 million for employee liability, cover for any hired-in plant, and professional indemnity cover of £5m.

7.5 The archaeological advisor to Wokingham Council will be contacted both prior to work commencing on site, and during the evaluation itself, to arrange a site monitoring visit and 5 days notice will be given. Any changes in the agreed project design will be discussed and agreed with the project consultant and the archaeological advisor to the Council before implementation. If necessary due to Covid restrictions remote monitoring with photography will be enacted.

8.0 References

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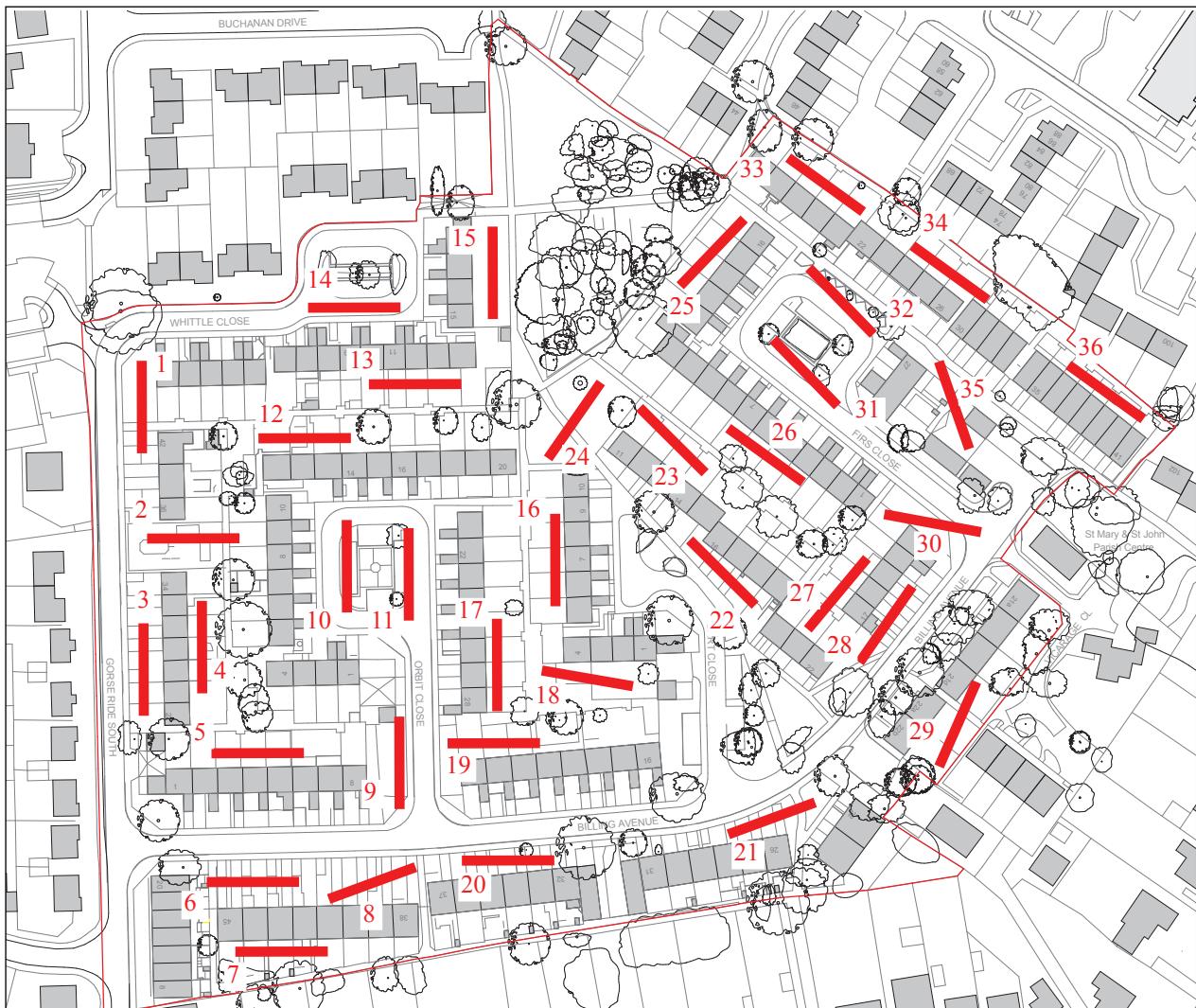
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**Gorse Ride South, Regeneration, Finchampstead, Wokingham,
Berkshire Phase 1 and 2
Proposal for Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of evaluation trenches and
existing layout

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**Gorse Ride South, Regeneration, Finchampstead, Wokingham,
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Figure 2. Location of evaluation trenches and
proposed layout

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