

Land at Johnson Drive, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire

Project specification for an archaeological evaluation

3rd September 2024



Ref: 23e120ev

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 Planning permission (app 233086) has been sought from Wokingham Borough Council for the erection of 8 dwellings following removal/demolition of the existing outbuildings at land at rear of 6 Johnson Drive, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU 8058 6515). A previous application for the construction of 5 dwellings on the site was granted subject to conditions including one relating to archaeology and it is expected that the current application will be subject to the same.
- 1.2 The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within an area of archaeological potential. In summary, this potential is of uncertain form with only a very 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 (e.g. Lowe 2013) and several upstanding Bronze Age round barrows are also recorded with a large example further west along Nine Mile Ride. An excavated burnt mound (Bronze Age cooking place) has recently been excavated at the former Road Transport Laboratory in Crowthorne Wood to the east (Chittock et. al 2021) which adds to the small corpus of such sites now recorded in Berkshire (Ford, 2017). 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 (e.g. Hardy et al 2019; Pine 2003; Platt 2013; Ford 2019) with a number of unexcavated iron production sites represented by small slagheaps (Ford 1987, fig. 38).
- 1.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Bagshot Formation – Sand (BGS 2000) and the site lies at a height of 65m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

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 2021), Policy TB25 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 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 2021)' 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 paleoenvironmental 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 provide information in order to draw up a mitigation strategy if necessary.

- d) 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 We propose to dig 13 trenches 25m long and 1.8-2.0m wide. The trench positions in Fig. 2 are indicative only and they may need to be moved to avoid obstacles or services.
- 4.2 A contingency of 5m 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 JCB-type or 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 affected 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 (9th edition 2021). 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 Trimble survey-grade GPS units with centimetre accuracy.
- 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 Andy Taylor, Mr Kyle Beaverstock, Dr Steve Ford, Dr Pierre Manisse, Ms Anne Huvig, Ms Beth Tucker, Mr Luciano Cicu, Mr Jamie Williams or Ms Maisie Foster |
| Post excavation | Mr Steve Preston |
| Finds coordination | Dr Cristina Matteos-Leal |
| Pottery Specialist | (from) Dr Jane Timby, Ms Sue Anderson, Mr Luke Barber, (consultants) |
| Environment (general) | Professor Mark Robinson (Oxford University) |
| Brick and Tile | Ms Danielle Milbank (TVAS) |
| Carbonised botanical remains | Professor Mark Robinson (Oxford University), Ms Rosalind McKenna (consultant) or Ms Joanna Pine (TVAS) |
| 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 Ms Sophie Peng (TVAS) |
| Pollen | Mr Dan Young (Quest, Reading University) |
| Wood | Ms Rosalind McKenna, (consultant) |
| Slag | Dr David Dungworth (consultant) |
| Archaeomagnetism | Bradford University |
| Radiocarbon dating | Queens University, Belfast |
| Conservation | 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.
- 5.2 The report 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 front sheet providing the following information:
- *Site name
 - *Grid reference
 - *Site activity (e.g. 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), ClfA guidance (ClfA 2020) 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.

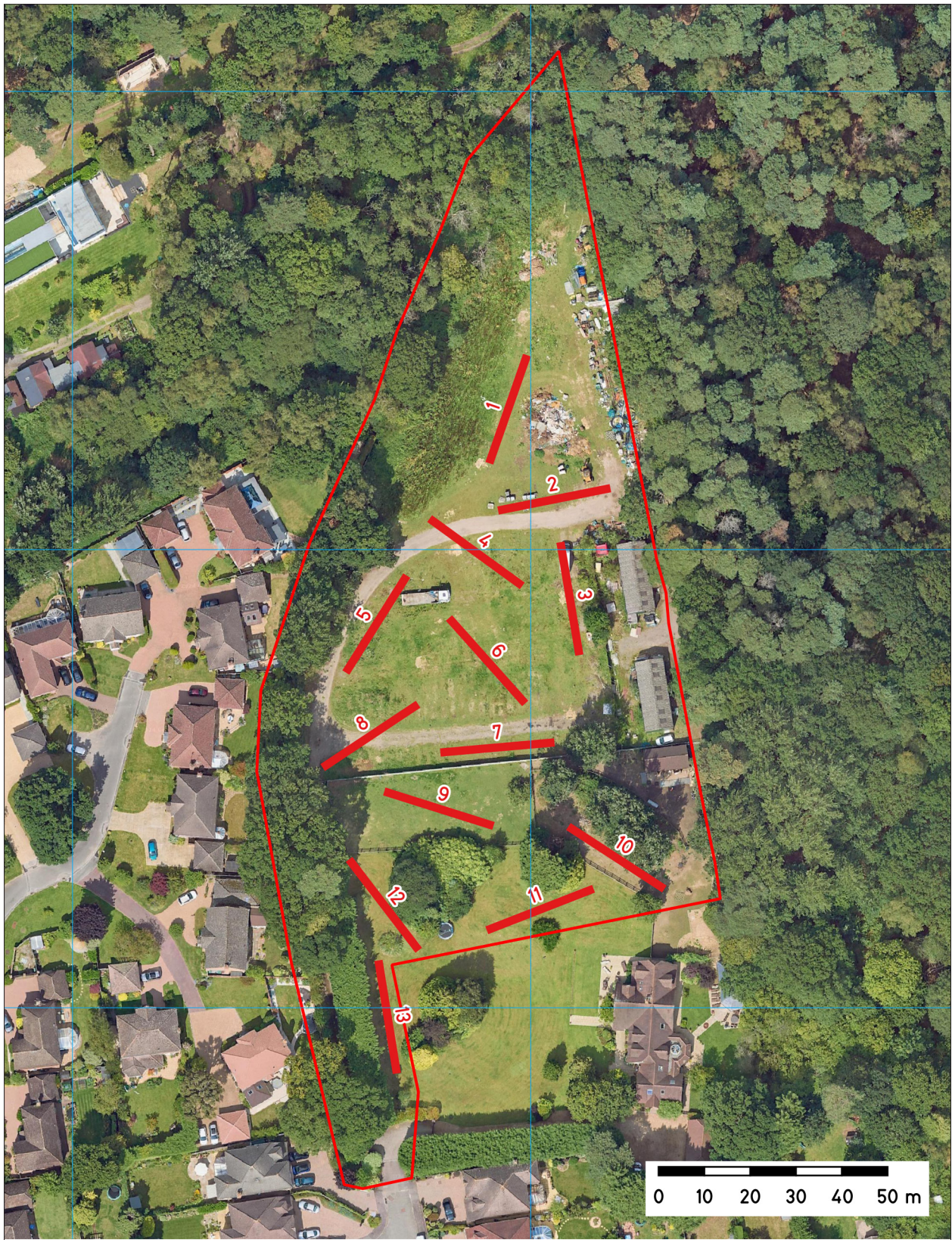
7.0 General Items

- 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 ClfA Standard and Universal Guidance for archaeological evaluation (2023a; 2023b) and Code of Conduct (2022) 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 fieldwork and post-fieldwork will be monitored by the archaeological advisor to the Council (Berkshire Archaeology) and all reasonable access will be provided to the works. Any changes in the agreed project design will be discussed and agreed with the archaeological advisor to the Borough Council before implementation. The archaeological advisor to the Borough Council will be contacted both prior to work commencing on site, and during the fieldwork itself, to arrange monitoring, in person or remotely via telephone/video call. Five days' notice will be given.

8.0 References

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**Land at Johnson Drive, Finchampstead,
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Proposal for an archaeological evaluation
Figure 2. Trenches overlaid on current site plan.

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**Land at Johnson Drive, Finchampstead,
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Proposal for an archaeological evaluation
Figure 3. Trenches overlaid on proposed site plan.

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