



Written Scheme of Investigation: Archaeological Evaluation Trial Trenching

Land between
School Road and
Orchard Road,
Hurst, Berkshire,
RG10 0SD



Project Number: 11173

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1. Introduction

Project Background

- 1.1** This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared by Charlotte Vallance of HCUK Group on behalf of KP Holding Group Ltd. It details a scheme of archaeological trial trenching to be carried out at Land between School Road and Orchard Road, Hurst, Berkshire, RG10 0SD. Hurst is a village in the civil parish of St Nicholas in the Borough of Wokingham. The site is currently grassland used for grazing and occupies an area of 1.147ha and is centred at SU 79645 73370. It is hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.
- 1.2** The Site is divided into two fields by a boundary marked by two mature ash trees and an oak tree, all of which have been allocated root protection zones. A public right of way (PROW) runs parallel with the east boundary between two existing kissing gates and set approx. 4.5m to 7m away from the eastern boundary. The PROW will be maintained during the trial trenching works.
- 1.3** An outline planning application (230074) was submitted to Wokingham Borough Council in January 2023 for the erection of 23 dwellings with associated access and 15 carparking spaces for the local primary school. The application was refused in February 2024 but appealed later that year. In October 2024, the appeal was allowed (APP/X0360/W/24/3342812) and outline planning permission was granted,
- 1.4** The following archaeological condition was applied to the permission;
- 5) Prior to the submission of any reserved matters applications an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) together with a timetable for its implementation, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timetables within the WSI.*
- 1.5** The Archaeological Officer at Berkshire Archaeology (BA), Linden Ellicott, has recommended a 5% trial trench sample is undertaken across the Site with an

additional 1% contingency should this be required (via email 14/05/25). This is in accordance with BA's standard evaluation percentages.

- 1.6** On this basis of these comments, this document represents a WSI for an archaeological trial trench evaluation of the Site to be undertaken in a single phase comprising 11 30x1.8m trenches.
- 1.7** In the event that archaeological remains are found during the course of the evaluation, archaeological mitigation fieldwork may be required. Any such work would be subject to a separate Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 1.8** The WSI has been guided in its composition by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2022), *Standard for an archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2023a), *Universal guidance for an archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA, 2023b), the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) issued by Historic England (Historic England 2015a), and adheres to the recommendations and policies of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) laid out in Chapter 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2024, paragraphs 202-221). Berkshire Archaeology's *General Standards for Historic Environment Projects* (BA 2021) has also been followed.

Geology and Topography

- 1.9** The British Geological Survey identifies the bedrock geology across the Site as London Clay Formation – Clay, Silt and Sand. The superficial geology across the Site is recorded as Kempton Park Gravel Member - Sand and gravel. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period.
- 1.10** The River Loddon flows north 1km to the west of the Site. A substantial portion of the parish lies within the alluvial flood plain of this river and its tributaries.
- 1.11** The Site is relatively flat between approximately c.38.50-c.39.50m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) with a very slight slope downwards of 500mm from east to west.

Archaeological and Historic Background

- 1.12** The Berkshire Historic Environment Record (BHER) was consulted in May 2025 for purposes of compiling this WSI.
- 1.13** The BHER holds 80 records for monuments and findspots within a 1km search of the Site, none of which are located in the Site itself. These records are presented below by period and their locations are shown on Figure 2.
- 1.14** There are no scheduled monuments within 1km of the Site.

Prehistoric (c.12,000 BC-AD 43)

- 1.15** The BHER holds 22 records of prehistoric date within the 1km study area, none of which are located within the Site.
- 1.16** The closest prehistoric BHER records to the Site are associated with the early prehistoric period and comprise three findspots. In the 1940s a Neolith (presumably a ?flint axe) was found in the Rose Gardens between the Cottages and the Churchyard at Hurst (00937.00.000) approximately 162m north of the Site. At Chain Cottages, two Neolithic flint axe heads (00475.00.000) were found approximately 282m east of the Site. A medium Mesolithic tranche axe (02979.00.000) was found at St. Nicholas Church 350m northeast of the Site.
- 1.17** There is further evidence for occupation in the early prehistoric period in the 1km study area. The East Berkshire Archaeology Survey undertaken in the 1980's identified at least two possible early prehistoric sites (03065.00.0000 and 3367.00.000) to the east and north of the Site respectively, through the recovery of lithics whilst fieldwalking. Many findspots were recovered elsewhere in the study area during the survey which include Mesolithic and Neolithic flint flakes, cores, blades (03395.00.000, 03394.00.0000 and 3396.00.000). Four prehistoric flint flakes (02522.00.000) found on the surface at Lea Farm during archaeological investigations.
- 1.18** An important late prehistoric settlement site for the region is located 1km to the west of the Site at Lea Farm. An archaeological evaluation undertaken in 1987

followed by an open area excavation in the 1990s identified and recorded the remains of an Iron Age settlement/farmstead (06580.00.000) and an Iron Age ditched settlement enclosure (06580.02.000). Notable features included pre-enclosure pits (06580.01.000), roundhouses (06580.03.000 and 06580.05.000), postholes (06580.03.001) a ring gully (06580.04.000), pits (06580.06.000) a linear (06580.08.000), ditches (02527.01.000), a four post structures, one of which may have been associated with the later Romano-British activity (06580.09.000) and a square shouldered feature of unknown function (06580.10.000). A Bronze Age hearth (06579.03.000) and an area of Late Bronze age activity consisting of pits and post holes (06579.00.000) found on the same site, indicating this settlement had earlier origins.

Roman (AD 43 - c.AD 410)

1.19 The BHER holds seven records of Roman date within the 1km study area, none of which are located within the Site. Most of the Roman evidence in the study area comes from the Lea Farm site and demonstrates the continued occupation of this Iron Age settlement into the Roman period. The location, close to the River Loddon which would have provided the Romano-British communities with a transportation route as well as facilitating trade and influencing settlement and agriculture patterns. The Roman evidence comprised two enclosures located at either end of central trackway of field system (06581.01.001), one of which may be a stock pen (06581.01.001). A trackway based on a co-axial field system incorporating the earlier Iron Age enclosure (06581.00.000) was also identified and a second phase of the field system consisting of a central trackway and paddocks were identified to the southwest and a more open area to the north (06581.02.000). Within the field system, two watering holes or wells with a flint nodule access ramp and waterlogged worked wood were located on edge of gravel terrace. A third possible water hole identified but not excavated (06581.02.001). Sherds of Roman pottery were found on the surface of fields (02523.00.000, 02526.00.000) during a fieldwalking exercise. To the south of the enclosures and field systems, a possible pit was excavated containing a noticeable quantity of charcoal fragments (02521.00.000),

- 1.20** To the north of the Site, a silver siliqua of the Emperor Eugenius (04169.00.000) was found at Whistley Court Farm.

Anglo Saxon/Early Medieval (c.AD 410- AD 1066)

- 1.21** The BHER holds two records of early medieval date within the 1km study area, none which are located within the Site.
- 1.22** Whistley Green village (03410.01.000) located approximately 700m to the north of the Site is recorded in two 13th century documents as a place called *Wisclea* or *Uuiscelea*, the name meaning 'marshy meadow clearing'. The records suggest there was a settlement here in 968 AD.
- 1.23** The ancient manor-house of Whistley (00958.00.000) stood close to the River Loddon in a park which is now pastureland of the Whistley Court Farm. The manor is believed to have Saxon or early Medieval origins. The earliest mention of the manor, according to the Victoria County History, was in the chronicle of Abingdon Abbey where it was recorded that land at Whistley was given to the Abbey in AD 968.

Medieval (1066-1485)

- 1.24** The BHER holds 18 records of medieval date within the 1km study area, none of which are located within the Site.
- 1.25** It is postulated by Paul Chadwick (the former County Archaeologist for Berkshire), the village of Hurst may be a shrunken village (00960.00.000). Shrunken villages are the sites of medieval villages, which reduced in size, but typically still have over 3 inhabited dwellings. There may not be any visible remains of the medieval village¹. Historic England describe them in more detail;

"Although the sites of many of these villages have been occupied continuously down to the present day, many have declined considerably in size and are now occupied by farmsteads or hamlets. This decline may have taken place gradually throughout the lifetime of the village or more rapidly, particularly during the 14th

¹ <https://co-curate.ncl.ac.uk/shrunken-medieval-village/>

*and 15th centuries when many other villages were wholly deserted. The reasons for diminishing size were varied but often reflected declining economic viability or population fluctuations as a result of widespread epidemics such as the Black Death. As a consequence of their decline, large parts of these villages are frequently undisturbed by later occupation and contain well-preserved archaeological deposits. Over 3000 shrunken medieval villages are recorded nationally."*²

Based on this postulation it is possible that the Site lies within or just beyond the boundaries of the original medieval settlement in agricultural land.

1.26 The name hurst or 'hyrst' refers to a wooded hill. There was a chapel of St Nicholas here, built in the late 11th century and referred to as capella de Herst, de sancto Nicholao in 1220. The Grade I listed Church of St Nicholas in Hurst (00960.01.000) has origins in the 13th century. The church features vaults (00960.00.000) which were located during a survey in the north chapel, the east gable and in the graveyard.

1.27 As discussed above in the previous section, there was also a settlement at Whistley Green (03410.00.000) 700m north of the Site which had origins in the Early Medieval period. Documents also record the founding of a timber church at here in the 1090's (03410.02.000). The fieldwalking undertaken as part of the East Berkshire Archaeological Survey produced quantities of medieval pottery from farmland in this area, suggesting continued occupation in this vicinity and possibly indicates shrinkage in the settlement of Whistley Green. The fieldwalking exercise also recovered a number of medieval pottery sherds across the wider study area (03291.00.000, 03291.02.0000, 03292.00.0000, 3292.01.000, 03292.02.0000, 3292.03.000, 03247.00.000 and 03410.03.000), which attests to the relatively intense use of the land in this period. Remnants of ridge and furrow earthworks were recorded during the Lea Farm archaeological fieldwork (02524.03.000, 02525.00.000, 02527.00.000 and 03251.00.000) as well as pot sherds (02525.07.000) and a ditch containing over 300 sherds of medieval pottery from late 12th to 15th century in date (02525.03.000).

² <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1007938>

- 1.28** The closest record to the Site is a Grade II listed house called Vine Cottage (03845.00.000) described as a late 15th hall house with 17th century alterations.

Post Medieval (485-1901)

- 1.29** The BHER holds records for five records of post-medieval date within the 1km study area, none of which are located within the Site.
- 1.30** In a *History of the County of Berkshire: Volume 3*, originally published by Victoria County History, the Parish of Hurst is described as it was in 1923; *The village of Hurst, which with Whistley Green lies to the north of the church, is somewhat scattered, and consists in the main of red brick houses and cottages with roofs of slate and tile. Several of the older cottages, however, are timber-framed with brick filling, and a few are thatched. Opposite the south side of the church is a row of almshouses, described on a tablet as a 'hospital for the maintainance of 8 poor persons each at 6 pence per diem for ever.' They were erected and founded in 1664 by William Barker of Hurst and form a low range of brick buildings with a return wing at each end. The roofs are tiled and have dormer windows.*
- 1.31** The 1840 tithe plan for the parish of Hurst (Plate 1) shows the Site to comprise open land situated between two roads in the village of Hurst, which at this time comprises dispersed houses and farmsteads. Plot 596 is registered to Robert Reginald Fairfax Wade Palmer and has 'various' uses. The adjacent plot 595 is owned by Robert Palmer Esquire and is described as an 'adjoining gravel pit'.
- 1.32** Significant buildings dating to the post-medieval period in the study area include the Hurst Bowling Club (MRM18516) and Hurst Lodge (MRM16448). The Club is dated to 1747 and lies in the gardens of the Castle Inn. Hurst Lodge is a 17th-century building with a new front of the latter part of the 18th century. The house was formerly the property of the Barkers of Hurst, a branch of the Barkers of Sonning and features an annex, barns, a squash court and gardens.
- 1.33** From the Leas Farm archaeological excavations, an earthwork (02524.00.000) dating to this period was found comprising a rectangular platform. It is about

0.23m higher than the general level of the field; and is associated with several other contemporary features (02524.01.000 and 02524.02.000).



Plate 1: The Site boundary laid over the Plan of the Parish of Hurst 1840

Unknown

- 1.34** There are numerous features of unknown date recorded within the 1km study area, none of which are located within the Site.
- 1.35** Three undated earthen mounds (00960.03.000, 00962.00.0000 and 0962.01.000) are present on the northside of David Street and Church Hill, almost following the course of these routeways.
- 1.36** Many undated features from the Leas Farm archaeological excavations were found. These include rectangular/sub-rectangular cropmark enclosure (02208.00.000) as well as undated linears (02525.01.000), 02527.02.000), ditches (02525.02.000).

02525.06.000), (02525.07.100, 02529.00.000), (02529.01.000), flints (02528.00.001) and postholes (02525.07.200, 02525.05.000).

- 1.37** More cropmark features have been identified close to the settlement at Whistley north and northwest of the Site. These include cropmarks forming incomplete enclosures (01127.00.000) and major linears (01128.01.000) of current unknown function and date.

Previous Archaeological excavations in the 1km study area

- 1.38** A number of intrusive archaeological investigations have taken place in the study area, though not in the Site itself.
- 1.39** The important excavations at Lea Farm (BHER ref EWK91 and EWK92) to the west of the Site have been discussed in the sections above. The fieldwork revealed the remains of extensive settlement activity dating from prehistoric times to the Romano-British period. Cropmarks visible on aerial photographs suggested the presence of an enclosure or field system, and a previous archaeological evaluation indicated a date range from the Late Bronze Age to the Romano-British period.
- 1.40** At the location of former Valley Nurseries in Whistley Green (BHER ref EWK214) 580m north of the Site, an archaeological evaluation revealed a modest number of features of possible archaeological interest. The trenches in the southern and eastern areas of the site showed a simple stratigraphy with no evidence of modern activity, and eight linear features filled with deposits of similar composition were recorded in five different trenches. Most of these features follow a similar alignment suggesting that the same features could have been uncovered in several trenches with at least three or four cuts running parallel across the southern half of the site, and one gully uncovered in the central area of the site on a different alignment. The features were undated and no finds were recovered except for single sherd of pottery of possible Early Roman date.
- 1.41** At Whistley Court Farm, 450m west of the Site, a watching brief (BHER ref EWK128) recorded two pieces of worked flint (a flake and a core) burnt flint, pottery and ceramic building material. With the exception of the worked flint, all the artefacts are likely to be of medieval or post-medieval date. the two ditches

identified which may be associated with field boundaries, or remnants of ridge and furrow.

2. Aims and Objectives

Regional Research Aims and Objectives

2.1 The Solent Thames Research Framework³ identifies gaps in our current understanding of archaeology in the area surrounding the Site and proposes key research questions that need to be addressed. Based on the Archaeological and Historical Background section above, it is proposed that archaeological investigations within the Site may produce data that could contribute towards the following research themes:

Chapter 6 Late Upper Palaeolithic-Mesolithic Agenda

- 6.3.1 Excavations in river valleys should be much more clearly focused on the wider use of these locations for settlement and the impact of settlement upon the surrounding landscape.
- 6.4.5 More microwear analysis on flint tools would provide a much better understanding of activities on site, including food resources used, food preparation methods, textile and other craft activities, and construction practices

Chapter 10 Later Bronze Age and Iron Age Agenda

- 10.4.5 For field systems in the Solent-Thames area, their origin and purpose, including the reason for co-axial fields and the form taken by field boundaries, would merit further study.
- 10.4.6 Changes in the relationship of fields to settlements across the region should also be investigated.
- 10.4.7 Research may show whether fields were mainly created to control grazing. The importance of grassland management in the Iron Age economy,

³ Gill and Hind 2014 Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment Resource Assessments and Research Agendas. Oxford Wessex Archaeology Monograph

and the degree of specialisation of grazing farmsteads, for example whether horse raising was a major economic activity in the Thames valley, should be explored.

- 10.4.8 The relative effects of climate change and socio/economic factors on changes in farming need to be clarified.

Chapter 12 Roman Period Research Agenda

- 12.2.1 Sites with well-preserved deposits of both late Iron Age and Roman date should be given careful attention in order to investigate continuity of local tradition at these sites. Sampling strategies should ensure that as wide a range of contexts are sampled as possible. Excavations of deep, well-sealed features are required (as opposed to buildings).
- 12.2.2 Radiocarbon dating should be used more widely and systematically to help understand change between the late Iron Age and early Roman period.
- 12.3.1 Environmental evidence should be collected and analysed to help identify how Roman field systems operated and developed.

Chapter 16 Later Medieval Period Research Agenda

- 16.4.1 The chronology of development and character of field systems and their relationship to settlement across the region needs to be further explored.
- 16.4.2 The character and organisation of ridge and furrow; field drainage.
- 16.6.3 The origins/continuation of dispersed settlement.
- 16.6.8 Village shrinkage and abandonment; change from hamlets to farmsteads.

2.2

These research themes will be revised as necessary both during and after fieldwork in consultation with the Archaeological Officer. The findings of the fieldwork with regards to dating, phasing, and evidence of different uses of the site will be key to informing these aims.

Evaluation Aims and Objectives

2.3 The general aims of the archaeological evaluation are:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or remains;
- To record the character, date, location, and preservation of any archaeological remains on Site; and
- To record the nature and extent of any previous damage to archaeological deposits or remain on site.

2.4 The specific aims of the investigation are:

- To excavate 11 trenches to expose the surface of any underlying archaeological horizon or the natural ground;
- To define the boundary of Hurst medieval village and to provide evidence for a 'shrunk' village.
- To identify any Romano-British or Iron Age activity on site and look for associations with the settlement at Lea Farm to the west.
- To identify any early prehistory activity on the site
- To clean the base and representative sections of the trenches and record them in both plan and representative section;
- To partially excavate any identified archaeological features so as to ascertain their extent, form, function and where possible date; and
- To inform the need (or otherwise) for any future archaeological works on the site by means of an illustrated report.

2.5 The objectives of the project are:

- To undertake the archaeological evaluation to provide further information prior to the construction of the proposed development;
- To undertake work in accordance with national best practice and guidelines;
- To archaeologically record any deposits, features or structures of significance);

- To analyse any remains with reference to the existing documentary evidence for historical development and land use;
- To produce a written account to include: summary, site description, deposit descriptions, deposit levels (relative to Ordnance Datum) and conclusions;
- To disseminate the findings of the work in an illustrated report, integrating the findings of the archaeological evaluation to produce as comprehensive a record as possible; and
- Provide an ordered archive.

3. Methodology

- 3.1** The trial trench evaluation will comprise a single phase of trenching which will be a 5% sample of the 1.147ha Site (Figures 3 and 4). Every effort will be made to locate the trenches in the positions depicted in figures. Should any unanticipated ground conditions be encountered which mitigate against excavating any specific trench in the agreed location this should be brought to the attention of the BA Archaeological Officer immediately, and an alternative location will be agreed.
- 3.2** A contingency of up to 1% of the area to be impacted by proposed development will be provided for additional trial trenching in order to clarify the presence, extent, nature and importance of deposits recorded during the evaluation.
- 3.3** Excavation will extend down to the surface of the first significant archaeological deposits or to the surface of natural undisturbed ground, whichever is uppermost. This will be monitored by a qualified field archaeologist. The only occasion where the use of a toothed bucket will be accepted is where large obstructions such as concrete bases need to be extracted and once this has been completed, the toothless bucket will be refitted.
- 3.4** Examination and cleaning of all archaeological deposits will be by hand using appropriate hand tools. Any archaeological deposits will be examined and recorded both in plan and section. At this stage it is intended to only partially excavate features so as to ascertain their extent, form, function and if possible date. A representative sample, sufficient to meet the objectives of the evaluation, of identified features will be investigated by hand and all features will be recorded. The stratigraphy of each trench will be recorded in full. The sampling strategy will be employed in order to fully understand the archaeological results, however, typically, this will mean:
- 3.5** Sections are cleaned sufficient to determine the layers and any cut features/structures present. This information is critical to understanding the depth at which significant archaeological remains are encountered. This information is

pertinent as it can be compared with information about impact depth of the proposed development;

- Linear features (ditches) should usually be sampled using a x1m slot;
- Discrete anomalies are normally sectioned (50% sample);
- If areas of complex, inter-cutting remains are encountered, the recovery of datable material and a detailed plan of the remains may be sufficient, investigation within a trench may be counter-productive; and
- Information of geo-archaeological deposits and environmental remains (e.g. waterlogged plants) should also be sought at this stage.

3.6 Should significant archaeological deposits be encountered that are worthy of preservation in situ, excavation will cease. A site meeting of HCUK Group Ltd, the archaeological contractor, the BA Archaeological Officer and client will be held to assess the significance of the deposits and to decide on a strategy for sampling them to provide sufficient data for a useful assessment or subsequent mitigation strategy.

3.7 All works will be carried out in accordance with the *Code of Conduct* as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2022). Accordingly, the project team will abide by the CIfA's code of approved practice.

Finds

3.8 Artefacts from topsoil and subsoil and unstratified contexts will normally be noted but not retained unless they are of intrinsic interest (e.g. worked flint or flint debitage, featured pottery sherds, and other potential 'registered artefacts'). All artefacts will be collected from stratified excavated contexts except for large assemblages of post-medieval or modern material. Such material may be noted and not retained, or (if appropriate), a representative sample may be collected and retained.

3.9 All identified finds, artefacts, industrial and faunal remains will be collected and retained. Certain classes of building material can sometimes be discarded after

recording if an appropriate sample is retained. No finds will, however, be discarded without the prior approval of the Archaeological Officer.

- 3.10** Excavated material will be examined in order to retrieve artefacts to assist in the analysis of the spatial distribution of artefacts.
- 3.11** All finds, where appropriate, shall be washed.
- 3.12** All pottery and other finds where appropriate, shall be marked with the site code and context number.
- 3.13** The finds assemblage will be retained for deposition with the site archive at the appropriate museum. Marking of finds will follow the requirements of the local museum.
- 3.14** All finds which constitute Treasure under the 1996 Treasure Act for England and Wales will be reported to the coroner by the finder within 14 days of discovery.
- 3.15** Any human remains will be left in situ, covered, and protected. If removal is essential, it can only take place under appropriate Ministry of Justice licence. Furthermore, if removal is essential, such removal will be in accordance with the *Excavation and post Excavation Treatment of Cremated and Inhumed Human Remains* (Mckinley and Roberts 1993), and the *Guidelines for the Standards for Recording Human Remains* (Brickley and Mckinley 2004) as set out by the ClfA.
- 3.16** Should finds that require immediate conservation be encountered, they will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged, and boxed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation *Guideline No. 2* (1983). Appropriate guidance set out in the Museums and Galleries Commissions *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (1992) and the current ClfA guidelines *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (2014) will also be followed. Packaging of all organic finds and metalwork will follow the UKIC/Rescue guidelines *First Aid for Finds* (Leigh, Watkinson and Neal 1993). Any necessary, conservation and treatment of metalwork will be arranged in conjunction with specialist conservators.

Environmental Sampling

- 3.17** Environmental sampling during the evaluation will target a representative range of contexts from each phase. Should significant environmental deposits be encountered, they will be taken and processed in line with Historic England guidelines *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (Campbell et al. 2011), and our internal policy. Provision will be made for the requirement of the following samples:
- Bulk samples of 40-60 litres, or 100% of the context, for process using a floatation tank for the recovery of charred plant remains from the 'float' and artefacts such as small bones, mineralised plant remains, charcoal and hammer scale from the residues;
 - Samples of 1-5 litres from waterlogged deposits for analysis of waterlogged plant remains. These may be taken as sub-samples from bulk samples;
 - Samples of 5-15 litres from waterlogged deposits for analysis of insect remains and other macroscopic artefacts. These may be taken as sub- samples from bulk samples;
 - Bulk samples of 100 litres for coarse sieving on site for specific artefacts such as animal bone;
 - Samples of 2 litres for mollusc analysis, with associated continuous column samples;
 - Monolith samples which may be sub-sampled for diatom, spore or pollen analysis; and
 - Monolith samples for soil micromorphology.
- 3.18** All environmental samples will be assessed for potential through summary analyses by an environmental specialist.

- 3.19** Bulk samples will be processed as soon as possible or discarded with the agreement of the BA Archaeological Officer. Residues will be treated as part of the finds assemblage.

Scientific Dating

- 3.20** Where appropriate, samples for scientific dating will be taken. Provision will be made for:
- Dendrochronological analysis from timbers;
 - C14 dating from organic material, which may be taken as sub-samples from bulk or;
 - monolith samples; and
 - Archaeomagnetic dating from hearths or other suitable deposits.

Recording System

- 3.21** A site code will be allocated ahead of any fieldwork commencing. This code will be used to label all sheets, plans and other drawings; all context and recording sheets; all photographs (but not negatives); all other elements of the documentary archive.
- 3.22** The recording system used will follow the Museum of London Archaeological Site Manual⁴. Context sheets will include all relevant stratigraphic relationships. If there is any doubt over recording techniques, the Museum of London Archaeological Site Manual will be used as a guide⁵.
- 3.23** A site location plan at an appropriate scale will be prepared by showing investigation area and development site in relation to surrounding locality.
- 3.24** This will be supplemented by a detailed plan, also at an appropriate scale, which will show the location of the areas investigated in relation to the overall site boundary.

⁴ Museum of London Archaeology, 1994.

⁵ Museum of London Archaeological Service. 1994.

- 3.25** Burials will be drawn at 1:10. Other detailed plans will be drawn at an appropriate scale, usually 1:50 or 1:20.
- 3.26** The extent of any visible archaeological deposits will be recorded in plan. Long sections showing layers and any cut features will be drawn at 1:50. Short sections will be drawn at 1:20.
- 3.27** Sections containing significant deposits, including half sections, will be drawn at an appropriate scale, usually 1:10 or 1:20. All sections will be related to the Ordnance Datum using spot heights and registers of sections and plans will be kept.
- 3.28** Upon completion of each significant feature at least one sample section will be drawn, including a profile of the top of natural deposits (extrapolated from cut features etc. if it has not been fully excavated). The stratigraphy will be recorded, even if no archaeological deposits have been identified.
- 3.29** At least one section of the test pits will be drawn or a representative part, including a profile of the top of the natural deposits (extrapolated from cut features etc, if the trench has not been fully excavated). Other sections, including the half-sections of individual layers of features may be drawn as appropriate to 1:10 or 1:20.
- 3.30** An adequate photographic record will be made of and any significant archaeological remains, including photographs of sections. This will comprise high resolution digital photography, and must illustrate, in both detail and general context, the principal features and finds discovered. Photos should also include working and site shots. A photographic register detailing as a minimum, feature number, location and direction of shot will accompany the photographic record. The register will be kept on standard forms.

4. Staffing and Programming

Staffing

- 4.1** The project will be managed on behalf of the client by HCUK Group. Full details of the contractor and the specialists likely to be used (who will be a CIfA Registered Organisation), will be provided to the BA Archaeological Officer once appointed. Summary CVs can be supplied as required.

Programming and Resources

- 4.2** The start date for the commencement of the evaluation is to be confirmed, however the work required as set out in the WSI will be initiated promptly following approval of this WSI by Berkshire Archaeology, ahead of development on the Site.

Monitoring

- 4.3** The project will be monitored on behalf of the local planning authority by the BA Archaeological Officer. HCUK Group will make every effort to allow proper monitoring of the archaeological investigation. Any variations to the brief or this specification will be put in writing and approval sought. Monitoring may be on site or remote, depending on the initial site findings.
- 4.4** All projects, both fieldwork and post-fieldwork, will be subject to a programme/timetable of work. Monitoring is to be agreed with BA prior to the commencement of the project. A minimum of two weeks' notice to BA Archaeological Officer is normally required prior to the commencement of a fieldwork project. If circumstances oblige a shorter notice period, this must be agreed with BA to ensure compliance with the WSI and to allow eventual discharge of any planning condition.

Access and Safety

- 4.5** Reasonable access to the Site will be arranged for the BA Archaeological Officer who may wish to make site inspections to ensure that the archaeological investigations are progressing satisfactorily.
- 4.6** Before any site work commences, a full risk assessment document will be produced setting out the site-specific health and safety policies that will be enforced in order to reduce to an absolute minimum any risks to health and safety. All relevant health and safety regulations will be followed.
- 4.7** No personnel will work in deep unsupported excavations. No excavations will be undertaken below 1.2m depth as a maximum, but this may be less where ground conditions indicate less stability.
- 4.8** All site staff and site visitors will adhere to the Principle 5 of the CIfA (2022) *Code of conduct*; 'All accredited members and Registered Organisations have a duty of care to employees, colleagues and volunteers' and Rule 5.2 of the same document; 'A member shall give due regard to the requirements of health and safety legislation relating to employees or to other persons potentially affected by their archaeological activities'.

5. Reporting, Archiving and Dissemination

Project Specific Reporting Requirements

5.1 A formal report on the results of the archaeological evaluation will be prepared on completion of each phase of fieldwork. The report will conform to Annex 2 of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation⁶ and will include:

- Non-technical summary (abstract);
- Introductory statements and site background;
- The aims and methods adopted in the course of the investigation;
- A description of the nature, extent, date, condition and significance of all archaeological deposits recorded during the investigation, with specialist opinions and parallels from other sites if appropriate;
- Illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs as necessary;
- A catalogue of finds, including any specialist reports;
- A discussion and summary of the results, including a statement of significance;
- An index of the contents and location of the archive;
- Sources consulted;
- A copy of the WSI; and
- A copy of the OASIS record sheet.

⁶ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2023b.

- 5.2** The archaeological contractor will provide a digital copy of the final approved report in .pdf format to BA, which will be lodged with the BHER and will become a publicly accessible document after an appropriate period of time (normally not exceeding 6 months). BA will also be provided with at least one copy of any formally published report, paper or monograph. Contractors are encouraged to provide GIS files showing trench and feature locations to aid their accurate recording on the HER.
- 5.3** Provisions will be made for post-excavation assessment of the results should significant archaeological remains be encountered. Following completion of the fieldwork, discussions will be held with the BA Archaeological Officer on the appropriateness or need for post-excavation assessment and subsequent deposition. The archaeological contractor will retain full copyright of any report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in this document. Any document produced to meet planning requirements can be copied for planning purposes by the Local Planning Authority.
- 5.4** Any information deposited in the Historic Environment Record can be freely copied without reference to the originator for research or planning purposes.

Archive

- 5.5** The site code will be used to mark all plans, drawings, context and recording sheets, photographs, and other site material during excavation.
- 5.6** The site code will be used to mark all plans, drawings, context and recording sheets, photographs, and other site material during excavation.
- 5.7** The site archive will be organised in accordance with ClfA's *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (2020) and the guidelines provided by the Museum of London.
- 5.8** On completion of the finds analysis, the landowner will be asked to sign a Deed of Transfer, transferring title of the finds to the appropriate local repository.
- 5.9** The minimum acceptable standard for the archival report is defined in Appendix 2 of the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment - The MoRPHE*

Project Managers' Guide (Historic England 2015). It will include all materials recovered (or the comprehensive record of such materials) and all written, drawn, and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. It will be quantified, ordered, indexed and internally consistent. It will also contain a site matrix, a site summary, and brief written observations on the artefactual and environmental data.

- 5.10** United Kingdom Institute for Conservation guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage⁷ will be followed.
- 5.11** There is currently no suitable store or repository that can receive archaeological archives generated within the boroughs of Slough, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest and Windsor and Maidenhead. Archaeological practices are advised to make provision to retain these archives until a suitable solution can be found, and budget accordingly to cover all the costs for future deposition.
- 5.12** It is acknowledged that the current situation in these Unitary Authorities is an impediment to obtaining a completed Transfer of Title form from the landowner to an appropriate store, which best practice recommends is achieved early in the lifetime of a project. The archaeological practice may wish to consider obtaining transfer of title from the landowner to the practice as an interim measure, making clear that transfer to a suitable museum or store will take place in due course with full acknowledgement to the original landowner.
- 5.13** The digital archive, comprising digital copies of the reports, but also of any digital data recovered from the site will be archived in accordance with ClfA Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives⁸ and the recently produced 'Dig Digital' guidance.⁹ This explains that a data repository 'must be able to guarantee long-term preservation and ensure that all data is useable and accessible into the future. The ability to meet that requirement goes beyond the capacity of museum-based repositories'. The digital elements of the project archive must be deposited 'with a Trusted Digital

⁷ Walker, 1990.

⁸ ClfA 2020d

⁹ https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/downloads/selection-toolkit/digdigital_full_guidance.pdf

Repository (HE 2018) which has a commitment to long-term preservation and access’.

5.14 Pursuant to these agreements, the archive will be presented to the appropriate local repository within six months of the completion of the fieldwork (unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in writing with the LPA). In addition, written confirmation from the client will be provided for the transfer of ownership.

5.15 The project will be registered and regularly updated as part of the OASIS project.

5.16 If a museum is currently unable to accept an archaeological archive, it may be acceptable for the archive to be deposited digitally with a trusted digital repository such as ADS if it constitutes only a documentary, drawn and photographic record and no accompanying finds or environmental archive. The appropriate level of archiving should be proposed on completion of the project for the agreement of the Archaeological Advisor prior to deposition. The project will not normally be confirmed as completed until the archive has been deposited.

Dissemination

5.17 A fully illustrated report will be submitted for approval to the BA Archaeological Officer.

5.18 Following submission and approval of the report:

- One bound and one digital copy of the report will be submitted to the LPA. The report will include the findings of the investigation as detailed above;
- One digital copy of the report will be provided to the Berkshire Historic Environment Record;
- The archive will be prepared as detailed above and will include two bound copies of the report;
- The shapefiles will be submitted to the BA Archaeological Officer.
- The (on-line) OASIS form will be completed for the project and the summary sheet included within the report.

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7. Figures

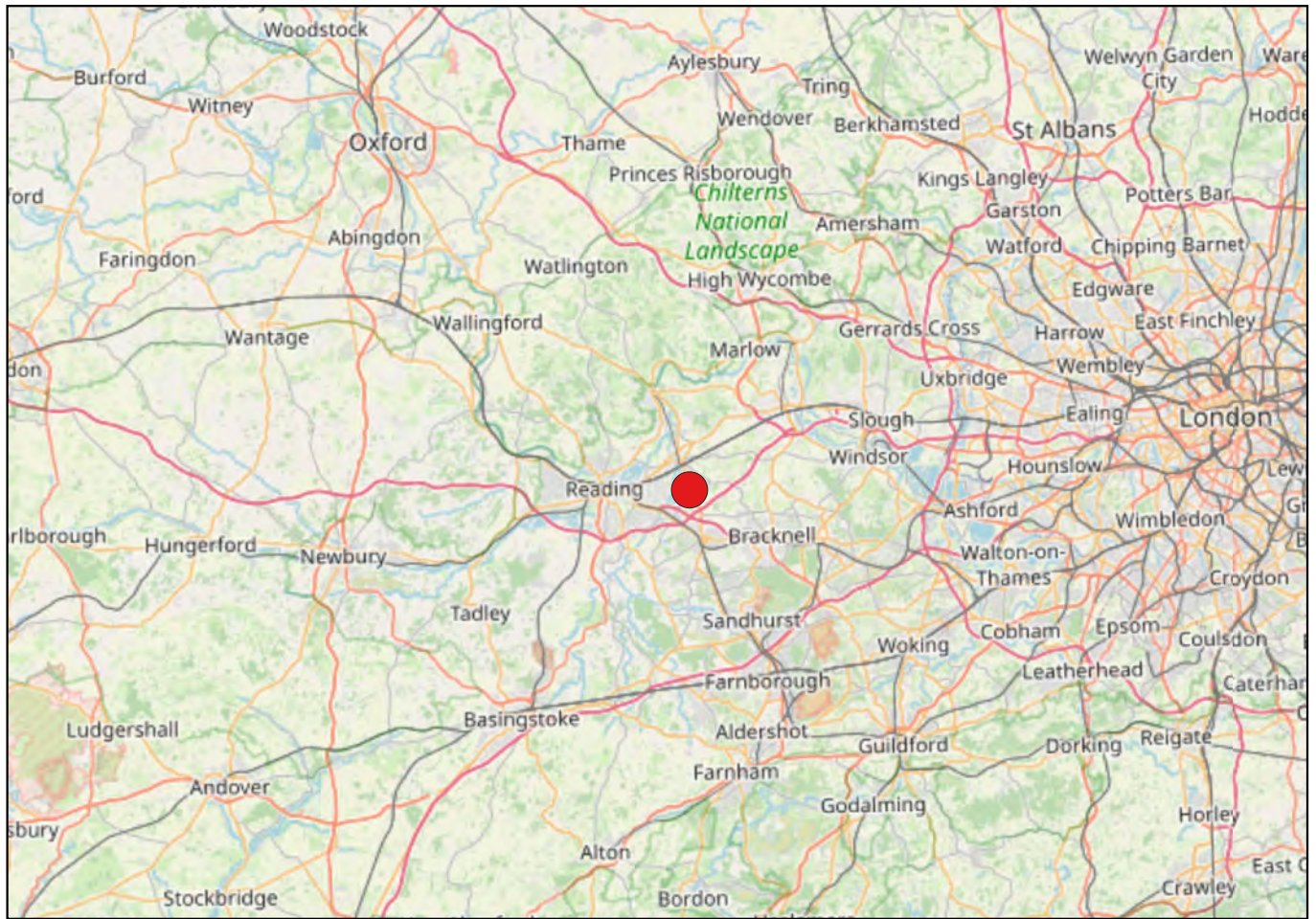


Figure 1: Site Location

May 2025

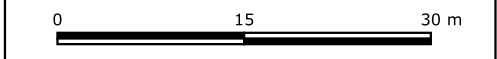
Land between School Road
and Orchard Road, Hurst,
Reading, RG10 0SD

HCUK
GROUP



Key:

-  Site Boundary
-  Proposed 30m x 1.8m Trial Trench
-  PROW



Land between School Road and Orchard Road, Hurst, Reading, RG10 0SD



Figure 3
Proposed archaeological trial trenching plan over satellite imagery



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Proposed 30m x 1.8m Trial Trench
- PROW

0 15 30 m

Land between School Road and Orchard Road, Hurst, Reading, RG10 0SD

HCUK
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Figure 4

Proposed archaeological trial trenching plan over proposed development plan

Project No 11173 | 20/5/2025 | Drawn By: CV