

Archaeological Field Evaluation

On Behalf of
Antler Homes

Concerning
**Land to the W of St Anne's Drive
& S of London Road
Wokingham
RG40 1PB**

December 2024

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Front Cover

Mid-excavation of Trench 023

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1 Non-Technical Summary

This Report details the results of the Phase 2 programme of Archaeological Field Evaluation undertaken on the 9th December 2024 in connection with the erection of 54 units (including 19 affordable homes) with an associated access road from St Anne's Drive, landscaping and open space on Land to the W of St Anne's Drive and S of London Road, Wokingham RG40 1PB (NGR: SU 83362 68628 – approx. centre).

The works were carried out on behalf of Antler Homes in response to Condition 3 of the Planning Decision (Planning Ref.: 203544; Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/22/3297645).

Eight trenches were set out across the Phase 2 area to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Site's archaeological and palaeoenvironmental potential. These all revealed a similar sequence of naturally occurring deposits, although hard-standing was recorded in Trench 019.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were present.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology (BA) were instructed by Antler Homes to carry out a programme of Archaeological Field Evaluation (AFE) in connection with the erection of 54 units (including 19 affordable homes) with an associated access road from St Anne's Drive, landscaping and open space on Land to the W of St Anne's Drive and S of London Road, Wokingham RG40 1PB (NGR: SU 83362 68628 – approx. centre; *fig.1*), henceforth known as the Site.

In accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF; Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities 2023), planning permission for the proposed works was granted by Wokingham Borough Council (Planning Ref.: 203544; Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/22/3297645) subject to Condition 3 of the Planning Decision.

Phase 2 of the Archaeological Field Evaluation was carried out on the 9th December 2024. This Report details the results of the programme of archaeological works and is for submission to Linden Elliot, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Council.

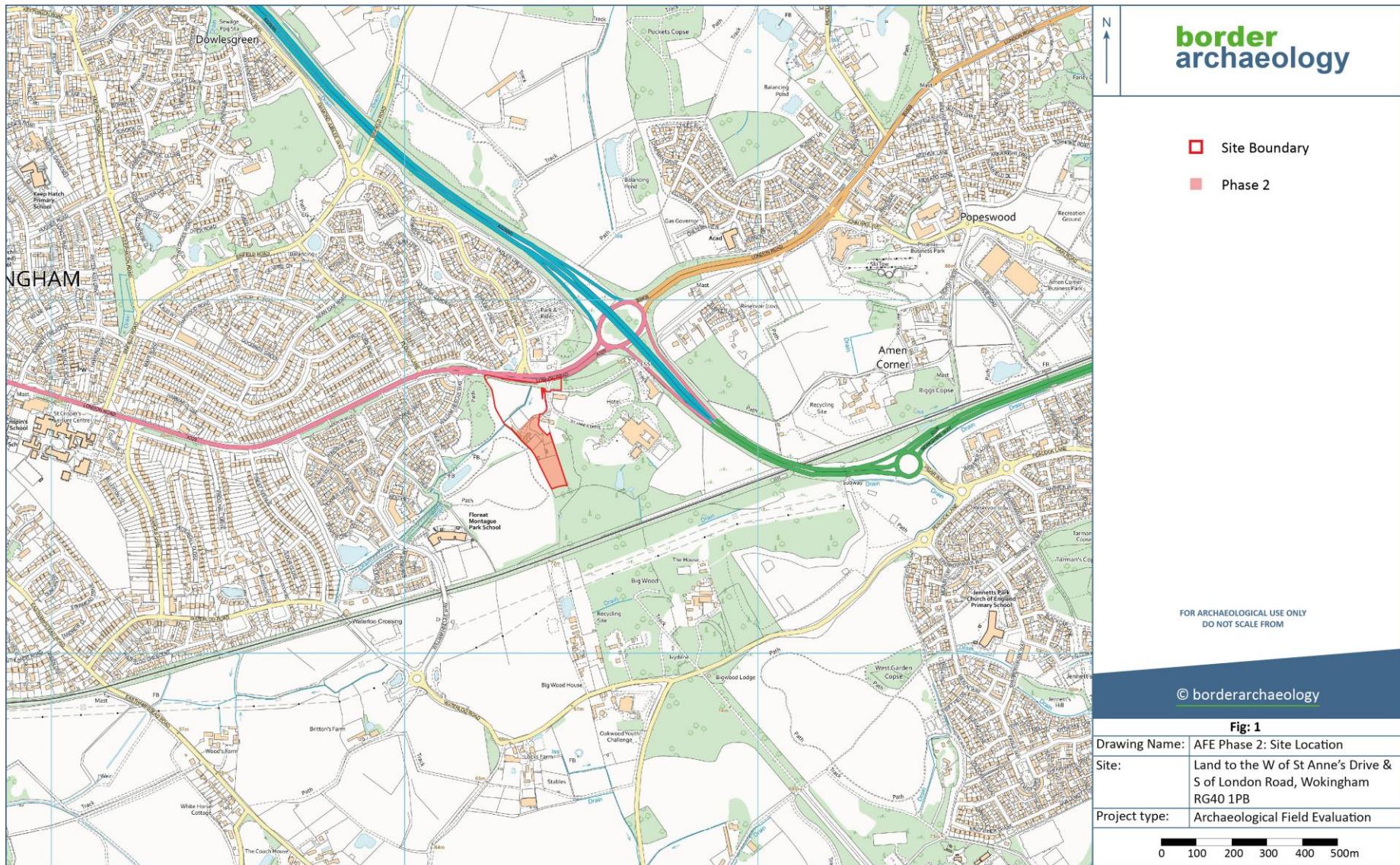
3 Site Description

3.1 General

Phase 2 of the Site comprised an irregular plot of land at the E extent of Wokingham, a market town located approximately 3.5km to the WSW of Bracknell and 12km ESE of Reading. It lies at a height of between 70m and 75m AOD and encompasses an area of c.13600m² that is bounded by hedgerows and mature trees on all sides, with London Road to the N, St Anne's Drive and a wooded area to the E, a wooded area to the S and undeveloped land to the W.

3.2 Soils & Geology

The British Geological Survey (BGS) identifies the underlying geology of the Site as comprising sand, silt and clay of the Claygate Member and clay, silt and sand of the London Clay Formation, sedimentary bedrocks that formed approximately 47.8 to 56 million years ago during the Palaeogene period. No superficial deposits are recorded for most of the Site; however, a spur of superficial Head deposits – consisting of clay, silt, sand and gravel that formed during the Quaternary period between 2.588 million years ago and the present – are recorded in the W of the development area (BGS 2023).





4 Historical & Archaeological Background

The previously submitted *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI; BA 2023a) outlined the archaeological and historical background within a 500m study area around the Site and the following is a summary of the information contained therein.

4.1 Prehistoric & Romano-British

A number of findspots dating to the prehistoric period are recorded within the designated study area for the Site, including an assemblage of Upper Palaeolithic to Neolithic flint implements found near Amen Corner to the ENE (HER No.: MRM16378); a Mesolithic flint scatter and other flint flakes (HER Nos.: 03071.00.000, 000-03202.00.000, 03207.00.000, 03207.01.000); a Mesolithic axe-head found to the NE of Site (HER No.: 00367.00.000; a struck Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age flint found during archaeological works at Buckhurst Farm to the W of Site (HER No.: 04197.00.000); and a likely late Mesolithic to Neolithic struck flint found at the Auto Cross site to the NE of the Site (HER No.: MRM16641).

A further 23 pieces of likely Upper Palaeolithic to Early Bronze Age struck flint and seven fragments of burnt unworked flint (HER No.: MRM18234) were recovered from several locations during an archaeological evaluation and subsequent excavation at Amen Corner (HER No.: ERM1850). These works also produced fragments of Bronze Age pottery (HER No.: MRM18362), along with evidence for a Middle Iron Age banjo enclosure (HER No.: MRM18361) and two Early to Middle Iron Age boundary or drainage ditches (HER No.: MRM18233).

To the N of Site, archaeological investigations at Keephatch also produced a residual flake core, a broken later Neolithic arrowhead and a worked flake along with evidence for two Early to Middle Iron Age linear ditches that likely formed part of a late prehistoric field system (HER Nos.: MRM18360; MRM18357). An archaeological excavation to the SSW of Site at the Eastern Gateway also revealed a cluster of post-holes/stake-holes along with sherds of possible Neolithic and Iron Age pottery and 13 pieces of unworked burnt flint (HER No.: MRM18581).

A geophysical survey and subsequent archaeological evaluation (Oxford Archaeology 2006) at Peacock Farm, to the ESE of Site, revealed a Middle to Late Bronze Age pit and numerous linear features and pits dating from the Late Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

Further late prehistoric activity was recorded during archaeological investigations at South Wokingham Distributor Road, to the SW of the Site, where evidence for Middle Iron Age and Romano-British settlement activity was revealed (HER Nos.: MRM18270; MRM18445). Possible prehistoric settlement activity was also identified during an archaeological evaluation to the SW and SSW of Site in the vicinity of Brittons Farm (HER No.: MRM18525).

4.2 Medieval

The place-name of Wokingham, recorded as *Wokingeham* in 1146, is believed to have Anglo-Saxon origins meaning 'Homestead of the family or followers of a man called *Wocc(a)' in Old English (Mills 1998, 387); however, there is no archaeological evidence to support its origins. The settlement is also not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, but this is possibly because it was incorporated into the entry for the manor of Sonning which was held by the Bishop of Salisbury.

The urban development of Wokingham began after 1219, when market rights were granted and the principal streets of Market Place and Rose Street were laid out by the Bishop of Salisbury (Astill 2013). The town probably developed from a settlement focus around the Grade II* Listed parish church of All Saints (List Entry No.: 1155959), which was largely constructed in the late 14th Century on an older site.

Evidence for medieval activity within the designated study area is largely limited to the remains of former boundaries/field systems and evidence of agricultural activity as follows:

- a slight N-S orientated earthwork representing the boundary of Windsor Forest has been identified on the W side of Binfield, to the NNE of Site (HER No.: MRM18262);
- a curvilinear ditch system, two linear ditches and a single post-hole were revealed during the archaeological investigations at Keephatch (HER No.: MRM18358);
- an archaeological evaluation at Plough Lane, to the NW of Site, revealed late medieval/early post-medieval field boundaries (HER No.: MRM16444);
- four linear features and sherds of medieval pottery were identified during the archaeological evaluation at Buckhurst Farm (HER No.: MRM16775);
- possible evidence of ridge and furrow features were identified in a detailed gradiometry survey on land at Amen Corner North, to the NE of the Site (HER No.: MRM17552); and
- ridge and furrow features were identified through aerial photography near the A329M to the NW of Site (HER No.: MRM16453).

Two possible medieval rubbish pits and 14 sherds of late 12th Century and 14th Century pottery were also recorded during the archaeological excavation at the Eastern Gateway (HER Nos.: MRM18582), while the archaeological evaluation at Peacock Farm also revealed medieval activity comprising linear features and pits (HER No: ERM526).

In addition, medieval pottery sherds have been found at a number of locations within the designated study area, including whilst field walking near Amen Corner (HER No.: MRM16798, MRM16805) and during the *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey* (Berkshire County Council 1987; HER Nos.: 03313.01.000, 03351.00.000-03353.00.000, 03359.00.000, 03360.00.000, 03426.00.000, 03431.00.000-03434.00.000, 03437.00.000).

4.3 Post-Medieval & Modern

A number of the aforementioned sites also produced evidence for post-medieval activity, including:

- the remains of a substantial brick constructed kiln found during the archaeological evaluation at Peacock Farm (HER No.: ERM526);
- a number of ditches and other undated but possibly contemporary features excavated at Keephatch (HER No.: MRM18359);
- the remains of a field system identified at Buckhurst Farm (HER No.: MRM16777); and
- a ditch and a gully recorded during the archaeological excavation at the Eastern Gateway (HER No.: MRM18583).

An archaeological investigation at Amen Corner also revealed two pits, which possibly represented the remains of a fence line, and two linear features of post-medieval date (HER No.: MRM16750).

Furthermore, a post-medieval enclosed field system is depicted on an 1817 enclosure map to the ENE of Site and, during an archaeological evaluation of the area in 2021, a ditch/hedgerow feature was identified (HER No.: MRM16643). A number of extant historic hedgerows reflecting boundaries depicted on the 1839 Binfield and 1842 Wokingham Tithe maps are also recorded on land to the NW of the Site (HER No.: MRM17491).

In addition, the Berkshire HER records the site of an early to mid-19th Century windmill to the ENE of Site (HER No.: MRM16165); a section of railway line between Wokingham Station and Bracknell Station to the SE of Site (HER No.: 05057.01.000); a series of late 19th to mid-20th Century gravel extraction pits on land NW of Amen Corner (HER No.: MRM17492); and a gunflint found on a footpath to the SE of Blackmans Copse to the NE of Site (HER No.: 03533.00.000).

4.4 Cartographic Evidence

The earliest available map to show the Site in any appreciable detail is Rocque's 1761 map of Berkshire. This shows Wokingham (written as *Oakingham*) as a smaller nucleated settlement, with the Site lying at some distance to the ESE, just S of a road named Copid Beech Lane and N of a small wooded area adjoining Yieldhall Green. The land containing the Site appears to be agricultural with a structure located towards the SW corner; three further structures are also shown on the land immediately to the E.

Walter's map of Windsor Forest and its vicinity from 1823-1856 shows a similar layout to that of Rocque, although the land containing the Site appears to have been subdivided into five separate plots, two of which contain buildings. The structures on the land immediately E of Site also now number four and appear to be part of Broadhurst Farm.

The 1842 Wokingham Tithe map shows the Site as comprising Plot 1189 along with parts of Plots 1191, 1192, 1193 and 1350. The only structure present within the boundaries of the Site is within Plot 1192, although further

structures are visible just beyond the E Site boundary within Plots 1190 and 1191. The Tithe Apportionments of 1839 record Plot 1192 as a house, garden and meadow, with Plots 1189 and 1193 listed as arable land named 'Pightle'; these were owned and occupied by one Thomas Lane. Plots 1191 and 1350 to the E are recorded as a meadow and Great Meadow respectively and these were both owned by William Heelas, although his son, William Heelas Junior, occupied Plot 1191.

The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1871 shows a similar layout to the Wokingham Tithe map, although what was Plot 1191 has been further subdivided into two fields, with the Northern being mostly wooded and the Southern containing what appears to be a small pond. Additional structures are also present within what was Plot 1192, while the SW extent of what was the Great Meadow (Plot 1350) has been fenced off as part of the wooded area to the S of Site and a ditch is depicted along this boundary. The structures located just beyond the E Site boundary within what was Plots 1190 and 1191 are now named Grove Cottage, while the road to the N of the Site is labelled Coppidbeech Lane.

The 2nd Edition OS map of 1899 shows a change to a number of the field boundaries within the limits of the Site, including the aforementioned subdivision within what was Plot 1191, which has been removed to create one single field once again. Some of the structures within what was Plot 1192 also seem to have been removed and a well is now marked in this area, while an access road has been constructed along the NE Site boundary, separating it from Grove Cottage; a building depicted to the S of Grove Cottage has also been extended so that its W wing now falls within the boundaries of the Site. An E-W oriented footpath is shown crossing the Site towards its centre in what would have been the W extent of the Great Meadow (Plot 1350), where new field boundaries are depicted creating a roughly C-shaped plot of land within the Site boundaries. The former field boundary in the S-most part of the Site also appears to have been removed, although this area is still wooded, forming the N extent of the Union and Rural District Boundary.

The 1912 OS map shows that the footpath and field boundaries in the S part of the Site had been removed by this date, with the only other change being the establishment of an orchard in what was Plot 1193. However, the orchard was no longer present by the time of the 1933 OS map, which shows this plot of land merged with what was Plot 1192, the former structures and well in this area having been removed; the small pond in the S part of what was Plot 1191 is also no longer present.

The 1966 OS map shows a number of additional changes in the vicinity of the Site, including: the widening of the road to the N; the further merging of the plots in the NW corner; the demolition of the building whose W wing extended into the boundaries of the Site and the construction of two detached buildings in its place, one of which lies within the Site boundaries; and the removal of the woodland in the S part of Site.

The only changes shown on the 1974 map are an apparent extension to the detached building within the Site boundaries and a new long structure shown along the boundary to the S of this; no changes are shown on the OS maps of 1993 and 1994.

5 Aims & Objectives

The evaluation sought to:

- ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on site;
- establish the extent to which previous development and/or other processes had affected archaeological deposits at the site; and
- establish the likely impact on archaeological deposits of the proposed development.

Additionally, the work aimed to address specific areas of interest as set out in the *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment: Resource Assessments and Research Agendas* (STRF; Hey & Hind 2014).

6 Methodology

All archaeological site works were undertaken in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2023) together with accepted professional standards, including *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2020a) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2020b). BA adhered to the requirements of the ClfA *Code of conduct* (2022) throughout the project and was cognisant of *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

6.1 Site-Specific

As outlined in the WSI (BA 2023a), a total of 8 evaluation trenches measuring c.1.8m x c.30m were excavated in Phase 2, this equating to 5% of the development area. The trenches were laid out to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Site's archaeological and palaeoenvironmental potential (fig. 2).

Trenches were opened by mechanical excavator using a wide-bladed toothless ditching bucket operating under archaeological supervision. Undifferentiated topsoil, made-ground and overburden of recent origin was removed in level spits by the excavator down to the geological horizon.

Each trench was cleaned by hand sufficiently to allow the identification and planning of archaeological features and scanned with a metal-detector. Each trench was planned at an appropriate scale. Spot levels were taken as appropriate.

6.2 Recording

The following reference numbers have been assigned to this fieldwork project:

- Site code: ADW23;
- OASIS ID: borderar1-520518

Full written, graphic, and photographic records were made in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2023b), as outlined in the WSI (BA 2023a).

The progress of the works was recorded and assessed using BA's ISO 9001 procedures.

6.3 Palaeoenvironmental/Palaeoeconomic Sampling

No archaeological deposits suitable for Palaeoenvironmental sampling were encountered during the course of the AFE.

6.4 Recovery, Processing & Curation of Artefactual Data

A small assemblage of Ceramic Building Material (CBM) was noted within the topsoil, made-ground and modern slit trench in Trench 019; however, due to the unstratified and likely modern date of this material, it was not retained (nr).

7 Results

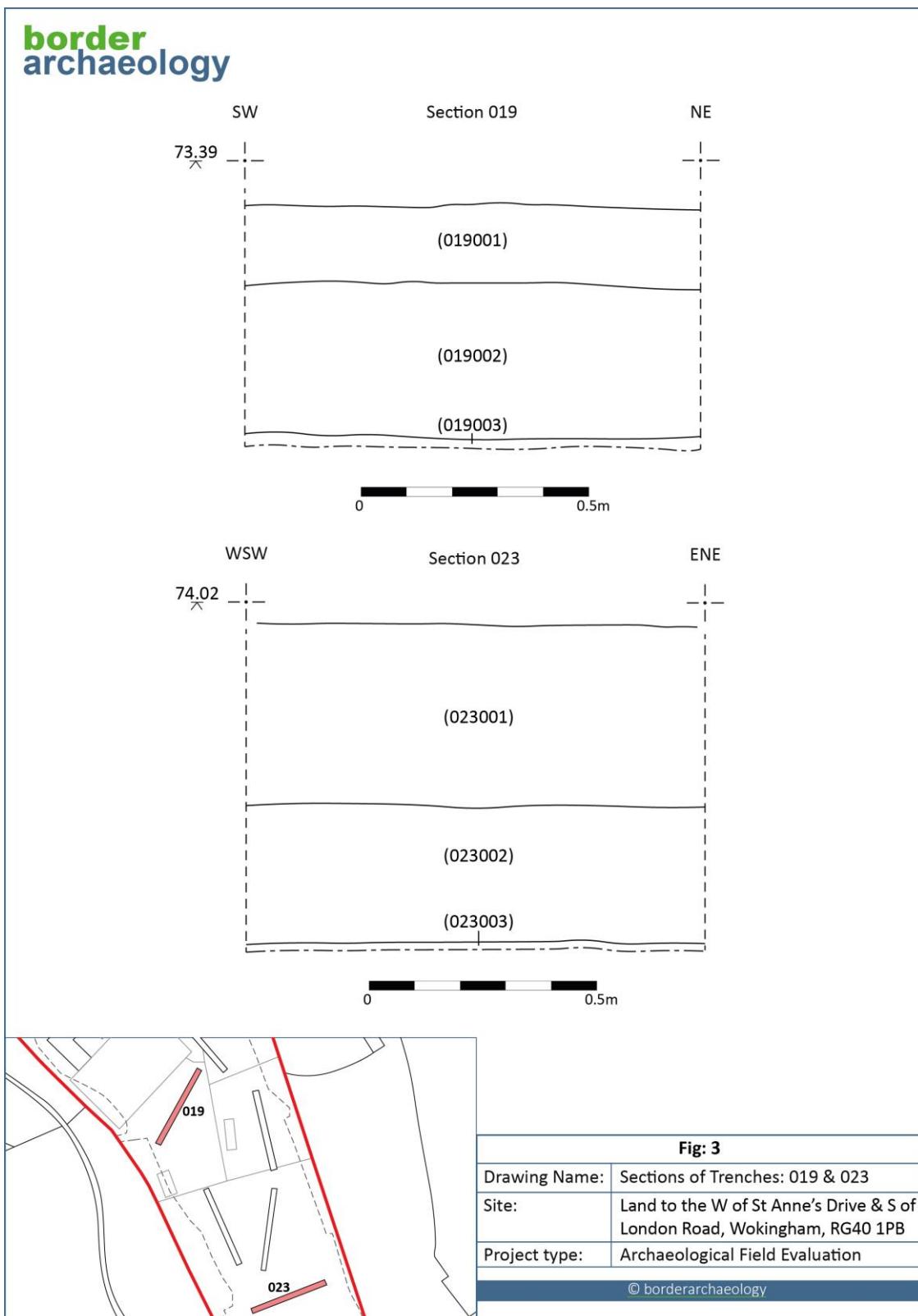
The results for the trenches excavated in Phase 1 can be found in *Archaeological Field Evaluation – Interim Report: Land to the W of St Anne's Drive & S of London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1PB* (BA 2024). In Phase 2, the deposits uncovered in seven of the eight trenches (Trenches 017, 018 & 020-024) were largely identical in compaction, composition and colour (see *Appendix 1: Context Tabulation* & *Appendix 2: Photographic Record*).

The natural substrate was generally characterised as a moderately compacted light to dark orange grey brown silty clay with patches of loosely compacted silty sands and gravels; this was encountered at a depth of c.0.50m-0.77m below ground level. It was overlain by a subsoil, which comprised a c.0.18m-0.3m thick dark grey yellow silty sand; this in turn underlaid a loosely compacted, mid-dark grey brown sandy silty clay topsoil, measuring up to 0.40m thick – see *fig. 3*.

Only Trench 019 contained a different sequence of deposits. The natural substrate (019003) was overlain by a loosely compacted light to mid grey brown silty sand with occasional small-sized stone inclusions made-ground deposit (019002), which was overlain in turn by (19001), a moderately compacted very dark grey brown sandy silty with frequent small-sized stone and Asphalt inclusions hard standing deposit – see *fig. 3*.

Clay field drains were encountered in Trenches 022, 023 and 024; these were left intact where possible. Modern disturbances were recorded in Trenches 018 and 019. Utilities and a modern drain were identified in Trench 018,

whilst a NW-SE orientated slit trench containing CBM and concrete was found in Trench 019; this may have been a French drain associated with the hard standing.



8 Discussion & Significance of Results

The eight evaluation trenches set out across the Phase 2 area all revealed a similar sequence of man-made and naturally occurring deposits. No features or finds of archaeological significance were present and there was evidence of extensive disturbance from the later 20th Century development within the Site.

9 Conclusions

This programme of AFE confirms that no finds or deposits of archaeological interest were identified within the Phase 2 area. The area surrounding this programme of works has predominantly been utilised as meadows and a garden as late as the 1842 tithe survey and, more recently, as a stable yard and horse paddocks.

The AFE carried out in Phase 1 similarly found no deposits or features of archaeological significance, with the exception of a 19th Century field boundary recorded in Trench 002.

10 Acknowledgements

This report was written by Christopher Hodgson BSc (Hons.) MSc. The illustrations were produced by James Brown BSc MSc, Archaeological Illustrator. It was edited by Ross Shurety MA (Cantab.) and was approved by Lyndsey Clark BSc (Hons.) MCIfA, Director: Archaeological Operations & Reporting. The archive has been prepared for deposition by Emma Hardy MA (Archivist) along with Kate Smith MA ACIfA, Director: Performance Delivery.

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13 Appendix 1: Context Tabulation

Trench No.	Context	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds not retained (nr)	Samples	Provisional date
017	(017001)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey brown sandy silty, very occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c.0.4m (max.) thick; overlies (017002).	Topsoil	CBM (nr)	-	Modern
	(017002)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey yellow silty sand; occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c. 0.20m (max.) thick; underlies (017001); overlies (017003).	Subsoil		-	Post-medieval
	(017003)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid- to dark orange grey brown silty clay; frequent patches of loosely compacted silty sands and gravels; underlies (017002).	Natural substratum	-	-	Geological
018	(018001)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey brown sandy silty, very occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c.0.3m (max.) thick; overlies (018002).	Topsoil	CBM (nr)	-	Modern
	(018002)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey yellow silty sand; occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c. 0.20m (max.) thick; underlies (018001); overlies (018003).	Subsoil		-	Post-medieval
	(018003)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid- to dark orange grey brown silty clay; frequent patches of loosely compacted silty sands and gravels; underlies (018002).	Natural substratum	-	-	Geological
019	(019001)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted very dark grey brown sandy silty, frequent small-sized stone and Asphalt inclusions; c.0.18m (max.) thick; overlies (019002).	Hard standing	CBM (nr) Plastic (nr)	-	Modern

Trench No.	Context	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds not retained (nr)	Samples	Provisional date
	(019002)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted light to mid grey brown silty sand and gravel; occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c. 0.32m (max.) thick; underlies (019001); overlies (019003).	Made ground/topsoil	CBM (nr)	-	Modern
	(019003)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid- to dark orange grey brown silty clay with blue grey patches around modern inclusions; frequent patches of loosely compacted silty sands and gravels; underlies (019002).	Natural substratum	-	-	Geological
	(020001)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey brown sandy silty, very occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c.0.30m (max.) thick; overlies (020002).	Topsoil	CBM (nr)	-	Modern
020	(020002)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey yellow silty sand; occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c. 0.20m (max.) thick; underlies (020001); overlies (020003).	Subsoil	-	-	Post-medieval
	(020003)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid- to dark orange grey brown silty clay; frequent patches of loosely compacted silty sands and gravels; underlies (020002).	Natural substratum	-	-	Geological
	(021001)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey brown sandy silty, very occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c.0.30m (max.) thick; overlies (021002).	Topsoil	CBM (nr)	-	Modern
021	(021002)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey yellow silty sand; occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c. 0.25m (max.) thick; underlies (021001); overlies (021003).	Subsoil	-	-	Post-medieval
	(021003)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid orange grey brown silty clay; frequent patches of loosely compacted silty sands and gravels; underlies (021002).	Natural substratum	-	-	Geological

Trench No.	Context	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds not retained (nr)	Samples	Provisional date
022	(022001)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey brown sandy silty, very occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c.0.32m (max.) thick; overlies (022002).	Topsoil	CBM (nr)	-	Modern
	(022002)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey yellow silty sand; occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c. 0.18m (max.) thick; underlies (022001); overlies (022003).	Subsoil		-	Post-medieval
	(022003)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted mid- to dark orange grey brown silty clay; frequent patches of loosely compacted silty sands and gravels; underlies (022002).	Natural substratum	-	-	Geological
023	(023001)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey brown sandy silty, very occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c.0.40m (max.) thick; overlies (023002).	Topsoil	CBM (nr)	-	Modern
	(023002)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey yellow silty sand; occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c. 0.30m (max.) thick; underlies (023001); overlies (023003).	Subsoil		-	Post-medieval
	(023003)	Deposit	-	-	Moderately compacted light to mid orange grey brown silty clay; frequent patches of loosely compacted silty sands and gravels; underlies (023002).	Natural substratum	-	-	Geological
024	(024001)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey brown sandy silty, very occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c.0.35m (max.) thick; overlies (024002).	Topsoil	CBM (nr)	-	Modern
	(024002)	Deposit	-	-	Loosely compacted dark grey yellow silty sand; occasional small-sized stone inclusions; c. 0.25m (max.) thick; underlies (024001); overlies (024003).	Subsoil		-	Post-medieval

Trench No.	Context	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Description	Interpretation	Finds not retained (nr)	Samples	Provisional date
(024003)	Deposit	-	-	-	Moderately compacted light to mid orange grey brown silty clay; frequent patches of loosely compacted silty sands and gravels; underlies (024002).	Natural substratum	-	-	Geological

14 Appendix 2: Photographic Record



Plate 1: Trench 017 looking



Plate 2: Trench 018 looking



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking



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