



Results of an Archaeological Evaluation on
Land at Bucks Copse, 78 Barkham Road,
Wokingham,
RG41 2RD

Wokingham Borough Council
Planning Reference: 221890

Site Code: BRW-EV-25

National Grid Reference:
480363, 168315

OASIS ID: aldingto1-538732

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1. Introduction and Planning Background

In October 2025 Aldington & Romney Archaeology was instructed by Mr Mark Leedale, on behalf his clients, to prepare this document. This WSI has been prepared prior to the proposed erection of two dwellings and garage, following demolition of existing garages (Planning Reference 221890).

Condition 6 of the planning consent states:

Archaeological Works – No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of works) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.

Reason: The site lies in an area of archaeological potential. The potential impacts on the buried archaeological heritage can be mitigated by a programme of archaeological work so as to record and advance understanding of any heritage assets in accordance with national and local planning policy. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB25.

2. Summary of results

The site was found to be void of archaeological finds or deposits.

3. Site Location and description

The development site (Figures 1 & 2) is centred on National Grid Reference SU803683. The site is a roughly square plot of land located immediately adjacent to the west of Bucks Copse, approximately 66m south of Barkham Road and 0.65 miles southwest of Wokingham town centre. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area.

It is important to note that the area investigated was much smaller than presented within the approved WSI. Upon arrival at the site, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total

area was impossible to investigate, due to a new build on one half of the site to the south (Plate 1) and an existing garage and driveway located on a further ¼ of the site to the north (Plate 2). Therefore, only ¼ of the site was subject to evaluation. This is explained further in Section 6.

4. Background

4.1 Geology

The British Geological Survey shows a superficial geology of Head; clay, silt, sand and gravel, sat upon a bedrock of London Clay Formation (BGS 2024).

4.2 Archaeological and historical background

The name Wokingham means 'Wocca's people's home'. Wocca was apparently a Saxon chieftain who may also have owned lands at Wokefield in Berkshire and Woking in Surrey. During the Victorian period, the name was altered to Oakingham, and consequently the acorn with oak leaves became the town's heraldic charge, granted in the 19th century.

The courts of Windsor Forest were held at Wokingham and the town was granted the right to hold a market from 1219. The Bishop of Salisbury was largely responsible for the growth of the town during this period.

From the 14th to the 16th centuries, Wokingham was well known for its bell foundry which supplied many churches across the South of England. During the Tudor period, Wokingham was well known as a producer of silk.

In the years 1643–44 Wokingham was regularly raided by both sides in the Civil War. These raids would involve the looting of livestock and trading goods, and over thirty buildings were burnt down, accounting for nearly 20% of buildings in the town at that time. It was not until the early 18th century that Wokingham had fully recovered.

The leather trade was an important industry in Wokingham for many years, and in particular in the 19th century. There were 47 shoe makers recorded in the 1851 census.

A tannery was recorded on The Emm Brook as early as 1687. A later tannery was located downstream in Tanhouse Lane. This tannery closed in the mid-1920's.

5. Specific aims of the evaluation

The primary objective of the work is to establish the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains on the development site and, if present, to characterise them in terms of date, type and interpretive potential. The latter is an important secondary objective, as a preliminary evaluation of the interpretive potential of any exposed remains will inform measures designed to achieve proportionate mitigation in the context of the proposed development. All measures undertaken in that regard will be determined following consultation with the County Archaeologist.

The aims of the archaeological investigation in general will be to clarify the nature and extent of any archaeological deposits and/or features and to contribute to local and regional heritage recording, which will include the following:

- To determine if any archaeological remains are present.
- To determine the extent and nature of the archaeological features encountered.
- To recover dating evidence and environmental evidence from the archaeological features encountered.
- To establish the sequence of the archaeological remains encountered.
- To characterise and interpret the archaeological features and finds within the context of the surrounding area and wider region.

6. Results of the evaluation

The evaluation was originally consisted of the supervised excavation of six trenches measuring approximately 4.5m in length and 1m in width (Figure 3). However, due to $\frac{3}{4}$ the site being either recently developed or under existing buildings, only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total site was suitable for evaluation. This resulted in the total area being reduced from 536.5m² to 134.12m². In order to achieve the 5% minimum coverage, the trench plan was revised. The new plan consisted of two trenches 3.5m in length and 1m wide, covering 7m² in total (Figure 4).

6.1 Discussion

The evaluation confirmed the site was void of any archaeological features or finds.

The stratigraphy of both trenches consisted of an upper layer of heavily disturbed topsoil with common pebble inclusions and modern building material, below which was a natural deposit of sandy clay with common pebble inclusions (Plates 3, 4, 5 & 6).

7. Conclusions

The evaluation found no evidence of archaeological material present within the development area.

8. References

Historic England, 2002. Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)

Berkshire Historic Environment Record/Heritage Gateway

British Geological Survey 2024

9. Figures

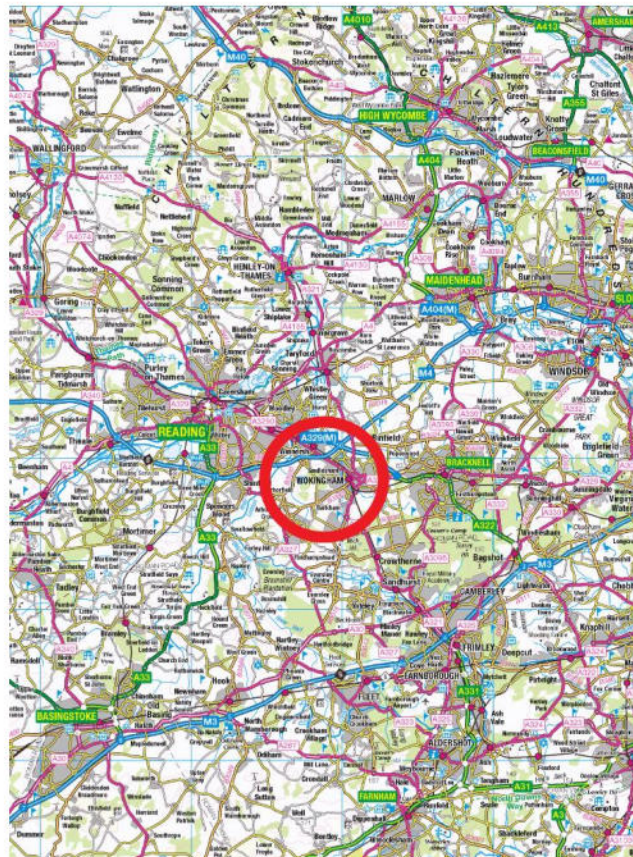


Figure 1. Site location.

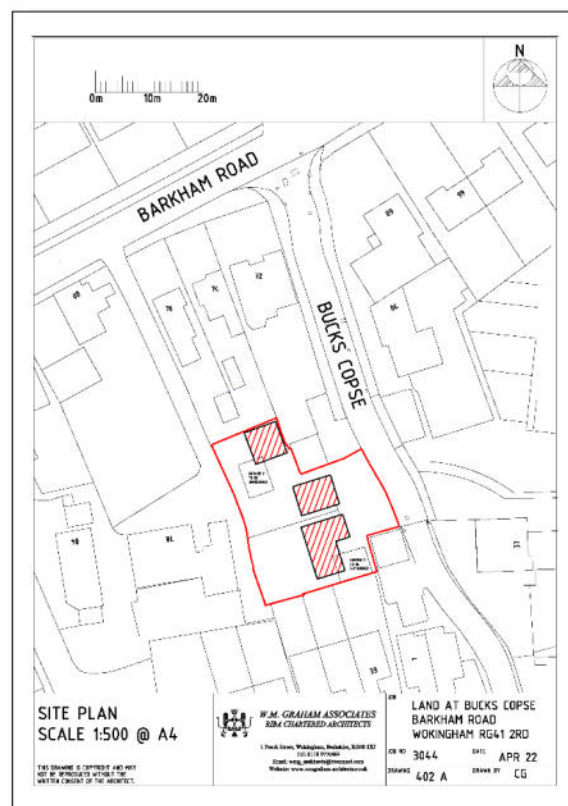


Figure 2. Site Plan.

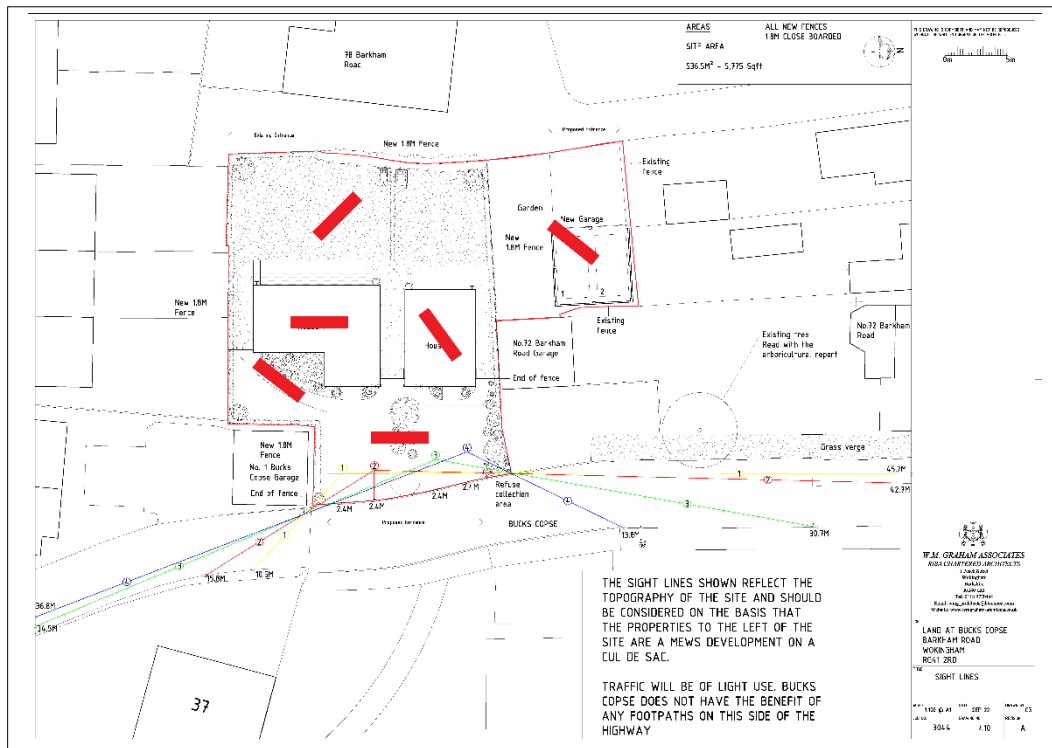


Figure 3. Original Trench Plan.

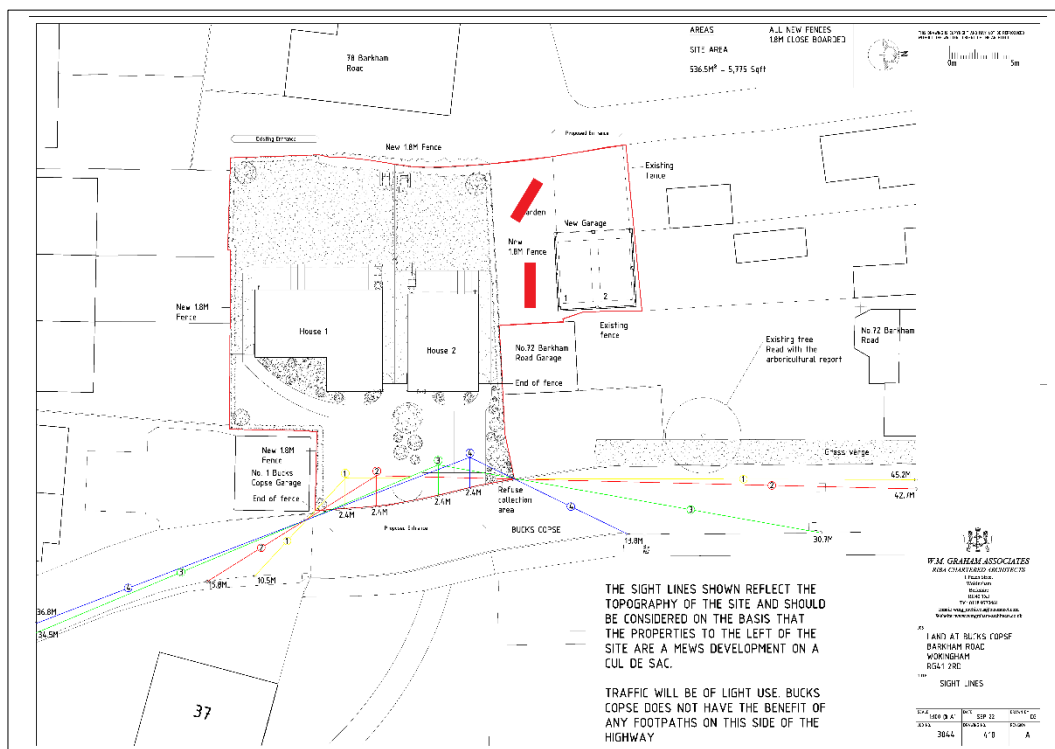


Figure 4. Revised Trench Plan.

10. Plates



Plate 1. New build to the north of the Site.



Plate 2. Existing garage to the southeast of the Site.



Plate 3. TR1 looking northwest.



Plate 4. Section of TR1.



Plate 5. TR2 looking west.



Plate 6. Section of TR2.

11. Trench Tables

Trench 1

Context	Description	Depth	Finds
1001	Topsoil – Dark, blackish brown silty loam. Heavily disturbed with inclusions of pebbles and modern building material.	0.60m	-
1000	Natural – Yellowish sandy clay with common pebble inclusions.	0.20m	-

Trench 2

Context	Description	Depth	Finds
1001	Topsoil – Dark, blackish brown silty loam. Heavily disturbed with inclusions of pebbles and modern building material.	0.60m	-
1000	Natural – Yellowish sandy clay with common pebble inclusions.	0.10m	-