

Former Travis Perkins site, Woodley Green, Reading, Berkshire

Project specification for an archaeological evaluation

18th February 2025



Ref: 24e185ev

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 Planning permission (250059) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council for the erection of a building to form a residential care home with access, parking, landscaping and associated works, following demolition of all existing building at the former Travis Perkins site, Woodley Green, Reading Berkshire (SU 7684 7349) (Fig. 1). Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, a planning condition (8) has been attached to the consent requiring that a programme of archaeological work informed by a focused Desk Based Assessment (DBA) has been completed. The archaeological work will require a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority in writing.
- 1.2 The site comprises an irregular plot of land that is currently covered in buildings and a car park associated with the builder's yard. The underlying geology is mapped as Lambeth Group – Clay, silt and sand (BGS 2000) and lies at a height of *c.* 46m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.3 The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in the Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (Madden 2024). In summary there are no known heritage assets within the site itself but it is located south-east of the Grade II listed Post-medieval Bull and Chequers public house. Previous archaeological works in the environs of the site has revealed isolated flint tools dating from the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. Documentary sources suggest that the site was a part of the medieval and post-medieval agricultural landscape close to Woodley Green Farm.

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 2024) and Wokingham Borough Council policies on archaeology.
- 2.2 Two component of work has been proposed for this area of the development: initially a focused archaeological desk-based assessment, which has been completed followed by 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 area. 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 palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.
- 3.2 This work will be carried out in a manner which will not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

4.0 Methodology

- 4.1 We propose to dig 10 trenches 12m long and 1.8m wide in the area of the proposed new care home as shown on Figure 2. The trench positions are indicative only and may need to be moved or subdivided to avoid obstacles or services.

4.2 A contingency of 12m 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° tracked 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 Borough 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 Borough Council. Human remains will be treated following the guidelines in (Mitchell and Brickley 2017).

4.3.9 Spoil heaps 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 GPS systems with sub-decimetre accuracy.

4.4.6 The photographic record will consist of digital images. 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
Project coordination	Mr David Sanchez or Ms Danielle Milbank
Fieldwork supervisor	(one of) Mr Andrew Taylor, Mr Kyle Beaverstock, Dr Steve Ford, Dr Pierre Manisse, Ms Anne Huvig, Ms Beth Tucker, Ms Maisie Foster or Mr Jamie Williams
Post excavation	Mr Steve Preston
Finds coordination	Dr Cristina Matteos-Leal
Pottery specialist	Dr Jane Timby, Ms Sue Anderson, Mr Luke Barber (consultants) or Dr Cristina Mateos-Leal (TVAS)
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 (consultant) 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	Quest (Reading University)
Wood	Ms Rosalind McKenna (consultant)
Slag	Dr David Dungworth or Mr Luke Barber (consultants)
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 2-3 weeks of completion of the fieldwork.

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

5.3 The text will address the aims and objectives of the evaluation, the methodology employed, describe the basic nature of the archaeological deposits discovered, and report on the artefacts recovered. It will

then attempt to place the significance of the findings in their local, regional and national setting if appropriate.

5.4 The reports will include a 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
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. The trench plans in GIS Shape file format will also be supplied to the HER.

6.0 Archive Deposition

6.1 The finds and site archive will be prepared in accordance with guidelines in MoRPHE (HE 2015a), CIIfA guidance (CIIfA 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 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 CIIfA Standard and Universal Guidance for archaeological evaluation (CIIfA 2023a, 2023b) and Code of Conduct (CIIfA 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 archaeological advisor to Wokingham Borough Council will be contacted both prior to work commencing on site, and during the evaluation itself, to arrange a site monitoring visit. Any changes in the agreed project design will be discussed and agreed with the project consultant and the archaeological advisor to the Council before implementation. 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.

8.0 References

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HE 2017, *Research Agenda*, Historic England, London

Hey, G and Hind, J, 2014, *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment: Resource Assessments and Research Agendas*, Oxford Wessex Monogr 6, Oxford

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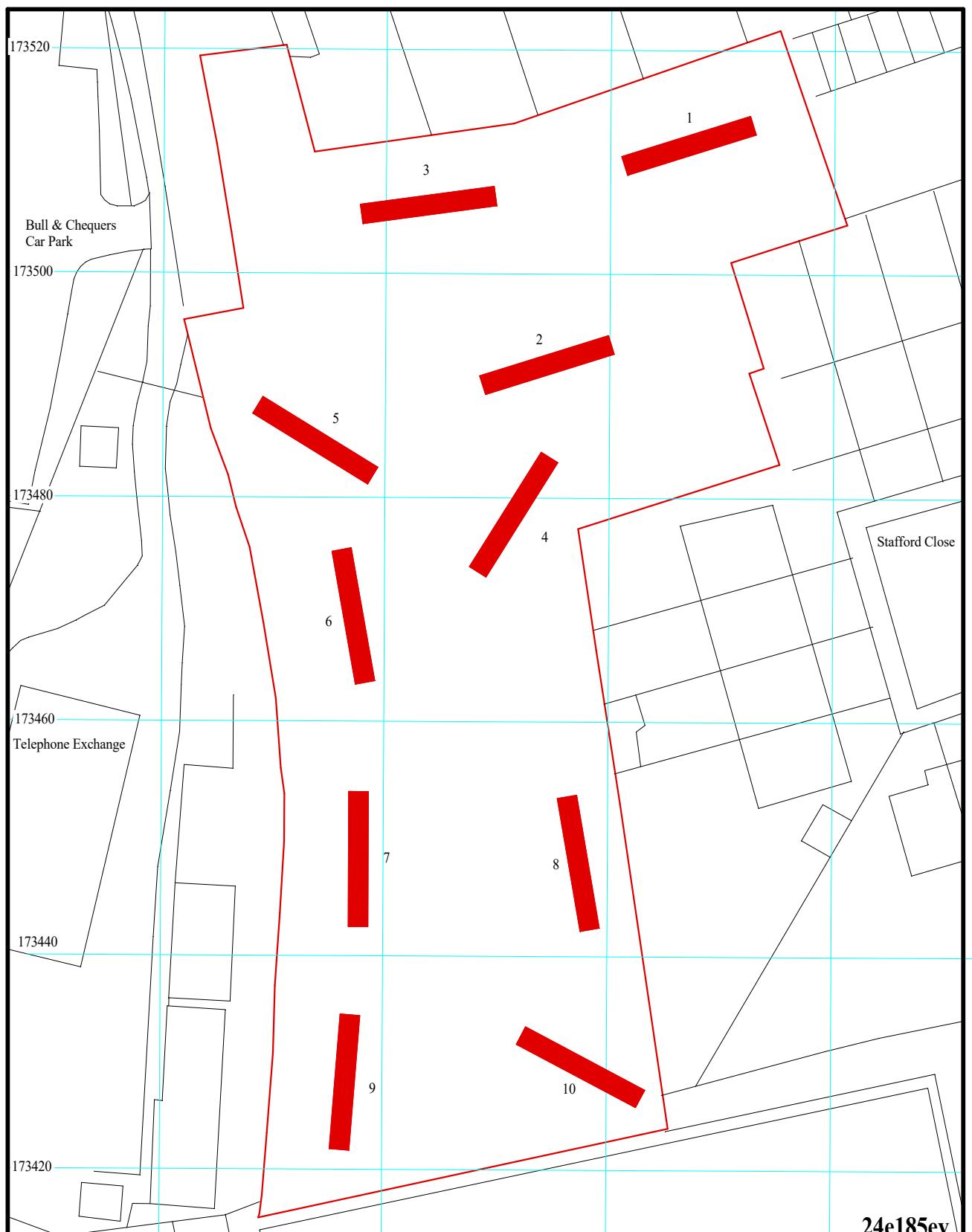
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Proposal for an Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Woodley and Berkshire

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Figure 2. Site plan with trench positions

0 25m

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