

**51 Denmark Street, Wokingham,
Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Mr. R. Wight**

by Steve Ford
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code 51DSW04/14

July2004

Summary

Site name: 51 Denmark Street, Wokingham, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8103 6835

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 3rd–5th February and 14th July 2004

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sian Anthony

Site code: 51DSW04/14

Area of site: 400 sq. m

Summary of results: No deposits or finds of archaeological interest were observed. Made ground directly overlay the natural geology.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The site archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5NR and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Sian Anthony 14/07/04 Steve Preston 14/07/04

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Report 04/14

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on land to the rear of 51 Denmark Street, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU 8103 6835) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tony Grover of BDS Chartered Surveyors and Property Consultants, Windward House, Hollow Lane, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire RG2 9AB, on behalf of their client Mr. R Wight.

A planning consent (LB/2002/5775) has been granted by Wokingham District Council for the construction of a two storey rear extension following demolition of existing rear extensions. Various internal modifications to the listed building have also received planning consent. As the development site lies within an area of archaeological potential, it is possible that the development may affect archaeological deposits. The consent is therefore subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16 1990) and the District policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr K Beachus, Senior Archaeologist for Babcote Group Limited, who then advised the local authority on archaeological matters related to planning.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Sian Anthony on 3rd and 5th February and 14th July 2004 and the site code is 51DSW04/14. The archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a parcel of land to the rear of 51 Denmark Street, Wokingham (Figs. 1 and 2). The site lies at a mean height of *c.* 65m above Ordnance Datum. It is bounded to the west by public open space and slopes down towards Denmark Street to the east. According to geological maps (BGS 1971) the underlying geology is Plateau Gravel but a fine, soft orange-brown sand was present in the observed foundation trenches.

Archaeological background

The potential of the site is derived from its position within the historic core of the town and Wokingham is thought to have been a new town created in the 12th or early 13th century (Astill 1978, 101). The place name of Wokingham is of Saxon origin but the settlement is not documented until 1146 and no archaeological observations have yet revealed late Saxon deposits. Denmark Street may have been a later addition to the original town (*op. cit.* 102) and was originally known as Down Street at least as early as 1639.

An archaeological evaluation took place on the adjacent property to the rear of 47 and 49 Denmark Street (Saunders 2001). This revealed four pits and a posthole which were not dated but were thought to be of relatively modern date.

Number 51 is thought to be of 16th-century date and is Grade II listed.

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the project were to observe, excavate and record any archaeological deposits or finds affected by the new construction work. This was to involve the examination of new foundation trenches and any other deeply invasive groundworks.

Results

The foundations comprised strip footings laid within a trench which was 0.8m wide and 1m- 1.12m deep (Figs. 2 and 3). Following removal of an existing concrete slab c. 0.2m thick the stratigraphy comprised brick rubble and other made ground of recent date overlying the clean natural orange-brown sand. To the south the made ground was only c. 0.2m thick but this increased to c. 0.6m to the north. west. The natural geology was truncated by up to 0.6m.

No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

A soakaway and the related pipeline trenches were excavated under supervised conditions at the rear of the property. The soakaway was 2m by 2m square and lay adjacent to the western boundary of the site. Made ground layers were revealed, c. 0.2m thick with finds of modern brick and tile. This lay onto a layer of dirty brown grey clayey sand 0.18m thick with no finds or features. This lay directly onto the orange brown sand.

No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Finds

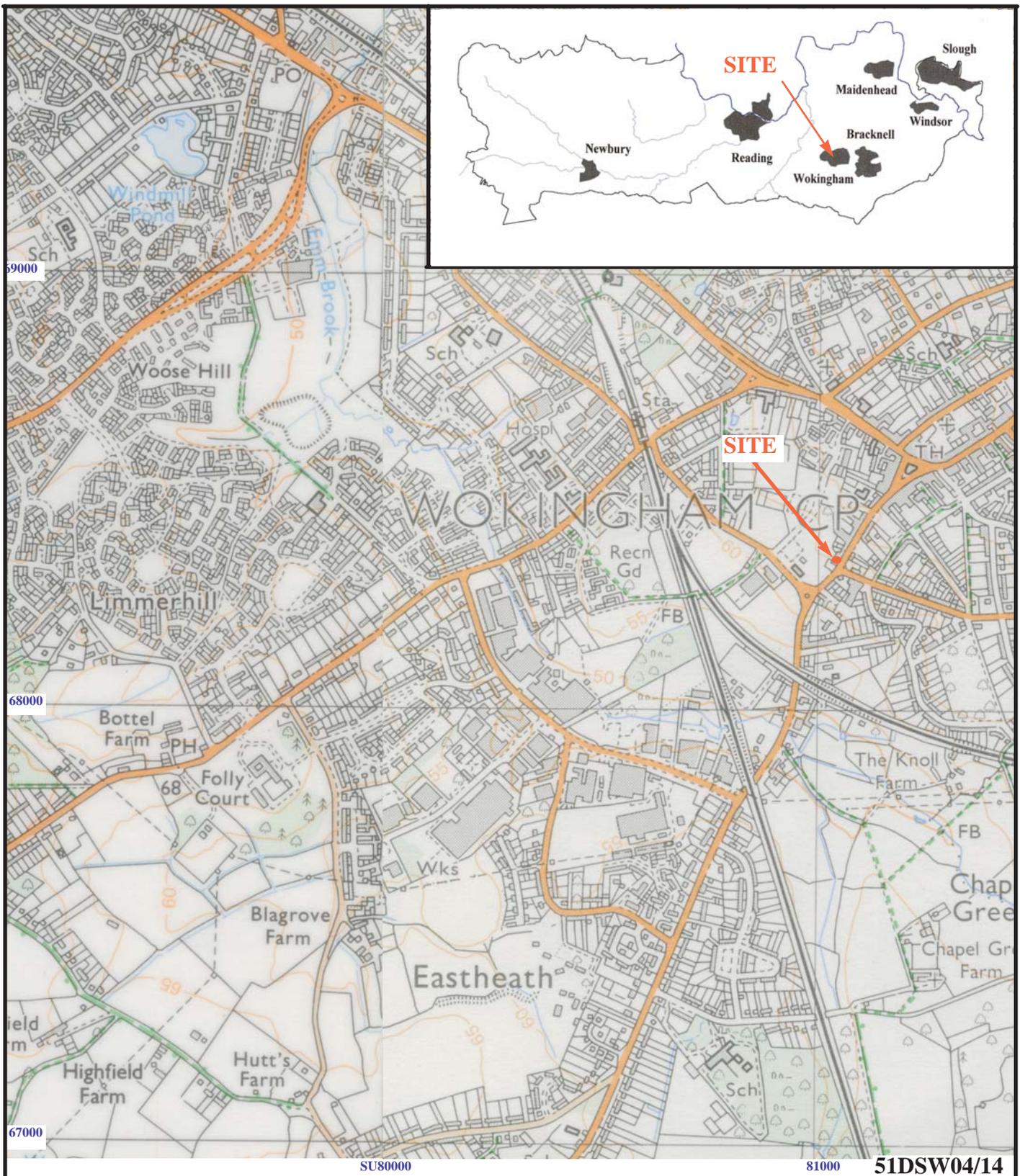
No finds other than of late post-medieval/ modern date were recovered and none of this material was retained for further study.

Conclusion

Nothing indicative of earlier post-medieval, medieval or late Saxon occupation was identified during the watching brief. The only deposits found were made ground of 19th/20th century date directly overlying the natural geology.

References

- Astill, G G, 1978, *Historic Towns in Berkshire*, Berkshire Archaeological Committee Publication 2, Reading
BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63,360, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, HMSO
Saunders, M, J, 2001, 47 Denmark Street, Wokingham, An archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 01/34, Reading



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Figure 1. Location of site within Wokingham and Berkshire.

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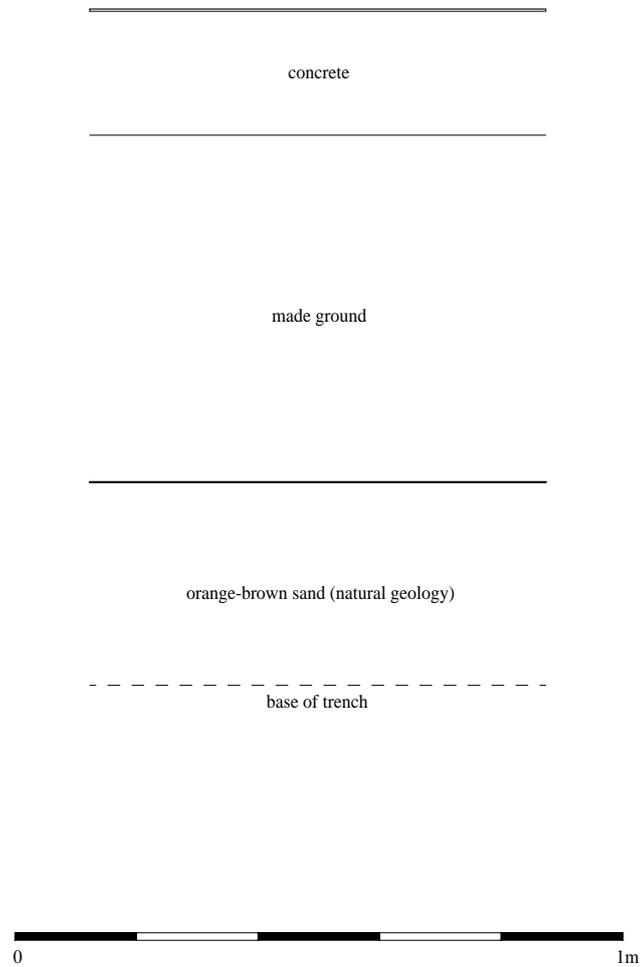


Figure 3. Representative section of foundation trench (north end).