

# Island Reach, River Gardens, Bray, Maidenhead, Berkshire

**Project specification for an archaeological monitoring and recording**

**7<sup>th</sup> February 2024**



24e22wb

## **Island Reach, River Gardens, Bray, Maidenhead, Berkshire Project specification for archaeological monitoring and recording**

### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The site lies on a parcel of land that occupies a space between River Gardens to the south and the River Thames to the north, in Bray, near Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 9076 7973) (Figs 1 and 2).
- 1.2 Planning permission (23/00940) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a replacement house and detached garage on the site following demolition of the existing house. (Fig. 2). The consent is subject to a condition (2) relating to archaeology which requires that a watching brief (monitoring and recording) be carried out during groundworks.
- 1.3 The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing document prepared by Mr. Edwin Wood of Berkshire Archaeology. In summary the potential stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a wealth of prehistoric and later archaeological finds recorded for the area (Ford 1987, Gates 1975; Dils and Yates 2013) and with many artefacts dredged from the Thames. The riparian setting is also a preferred topographic zone for occupation in earlier prehistoric (Mesolithic) times with several such sites recorded for Bray itself recorded in the county Historic Environment Record (eg Jenkins 2002). The site lies on or beyond the historic core of Bray with the parish church lying well to the west. The church has medieval (12<sup>th</sup> century) origins. Bray itself is mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002) and has late Saxon origins. The settlement had one characteristic indicative of urban status (individual representation at assizes) but this is thought only to reflect that the village had Royal connections (Astill 1978).

### **2.0 Requirement for Work**

- 2.1 A watching brief is required as set out in *The National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021). This is to take place during groundworks as a result of the possibility of damage or destruction of archaeological deposits.
- 2.2 These works are to take place according to a written scheme of investigation approved by the Local Planning Authority (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) as advised by Berkshire Archaeology.
- 2.3 The Local Planning Authority will be re-engaged for the agreement of further WSIs, should any further stages of work become necessary.
- 2.4 No excavation work may proceed on the site until an archaeologist is present.
- 2.5 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 project are to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This is expected to involve monitoring of overburden removal, foundation trench digging and other intrusive groundworks such as the excavation of service trenches as necessary.
- 3.2 The potential and significance of any such deposits located will be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in Historic England Research Agenda (HE 2017) or any more local or thematic research priorities such as identified in the Solent Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014) as necessary.

#### **4.0 Methodology**

- 4.1 Archaeological deposits which are threatened by development will be excavated and recorded by hand. The plant used to dig foundation trenches will be fitted with a toothless bucket. Sufficient time will be allowed to carry this out within the groundworkers schedules.
- 4.2 In general, all finds and artefacts will be retained. All but a sample of some classes of building material will be discarded after recording. The categories of artefacts to be discarded will be discussed with the recipient museum and the archaeological advisor to the Council.
- 4.3 Metal detectors will be used to enhance the recovery of metal finds. It is proposed that this work will be carried out by in-house staff and with no removal of finds without reference to contextual information. No title will be assumed by the finder. Gold or silver finds will be reported to the Coroner and kept in a secure place as required by the Treasure Act (1996) and its subsequent amendments.
- 4.4 Conservation on site will follow guidelines in First Aid for Finds with any other specialist conservation work subcontracted to our project conservator (see project team, below).
- 4.5 A programme of environmental sampling will take place should sufficient well stratified subsoil deposits be located. Typically, this involves samples of 40l depending on the size of the feature examined. These will be sampled in consultation with our environmental consultants and the archaeological advisor to the Council. Sampling will take place according to Historic England (HE 2015b).
- 4.6 Discovery of any human remains will be reported to the coroner and, if excavation is necessary, will be excavated following guidelines issued by the Ministry of Justice. Recovery and recording methodologies for human remains follow standard procedures identified by Mitchell and Brickley (2017) and TVAS Field Recording Manual (8th edition 2018). Any human bone recovered of archaeological significance will be deposited with a local approved museum and will not be reinterred in earth.
- 4.7 In the unlikely event of an unexpected discovery of exceptional archaeological findings, such as extensive human remains or other complex archaeological deposits, this may require an additional level of mitigation to enable preservation in-situ (such as by a modification to the groundworks scheme) or further archaeological recording. The scope of this mitigation will have to be determined in consultation with the client and Berkshire Archaeology. In such circumstances a modest delay to the works on site may ensue whilst this consultation and resultant mitigation takes place.

#### **5.0 Recording Methodology**

- 5.1 A single context recording system will be used in accordance with the TVAS Field Recording Manual (8th edition 2018). Descriptions of individual deposits and features will be recorded on pro-forma context recording sheets.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 Heights above OD will be taken and recorded on plans and sections.
- 5.4 The locations of the trenches, and of all plans and sections will be tied into the National Grid.
- 5.5 The photographic record will consist of digital image. 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.

## 6.0 Post-fieldwork

- 6.1 Finds processing and analysis will commence immediately following the completion of the fieldwork. Post-fieldwork will be completed according to TVAS post-fieldwork manual (6th edition 2013) and CIFA standards (CIFA 2020a).
- 6.2 Artefacts/ecofacts will be cleaned, conserved and prepared for long term museum storage.
- 6.3 Specialist reports will be prepared on the artefacts recovered. Particular attention will be paid to correlating the pottery recovered with local or regional fabric type sequences.
- 6.4 Specialist analysis and reporting will be carried out by the following specialist staff or consultants as appropriate:

Pottery Specialists	Dr Jane Timby, Dr. Barbara McNee, Mr. Luke Barber or Ms Sue Anderson (consultants) or Dr Cristina Mateos-Leal (TVAS)
Later Prehistoric Struck flint	Dr Steve Ford (TVAS)
Stone Specialist	Dr Kevin Haywood (consultant)
Metalwork Specialist	Ms S Peng or Dr Robin Taylor (consultant)
Charred Plant Remains	Professor Mark Robinson (Oxford University), Ms Rosalind McKenna (consultant) or Ms Joanna Pine (TVAS)
Faunal Remains	Dr Matilda Holmes (consultants) Dr Ceri Falys (TVAS)
Human Remains	Dr Ceri Falys (TVAS)
Pollen Remains	Quest (Reading University)
Conservation	Wiltshire County Council Conservation Service

## 7.0 Report and Dissemination

- 7.1 A report on the results of the fieldwork should be available within two-three weeks following completion of the fieldwork.
- 7.2 The report will follow our established format, comprising a descriptive text, illustrations and catalogues in appendices as appropriate.
- 7.3 The text will address the aims and objectives of the project, 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.
- 7.4 The report will include a front sheet providing the following information:
- \*Site name
  - \*Grid reference
  - \*Site activity (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
- 7.5 The illustrations will include:
- a site location plan
  - a plan of archaeological deposits
  - profiles/sections of excavated features
  - Photographs of significant findings if appropriate
- 7.6 Any findings even if negative will be published as a note in any round-up contributions in an appropriate journal such as *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*.

- 7.7 A digital copy of the results will be supplied to the Berkshire HER. Non-published report(s) will be made available for inspection or download on the TVAS web site. GIS shapefiles of the trench plans will be submitted to the HER.
- 7.8 The report will be presented to the HER on the understanding that it may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder.
- 7.9 A digital version of the report will be provided to the OASIS project.
- 7.10 Copies of digital images will be supplied to the Berkshire HER (if requested).

## **8.0 Archive Deposition**

- 8.1 The finds and site archive will be prepared in accordance with guidelines in MoRPHE (HE 2015a), TVAS Digital Recording Policy (2021), Cifa guidance (Cifa 2020a) and after consultation with the recipient museum. Guidance produced by the Museum and Galleries Commission's Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (1992), the Society of Museum Archaeologist's Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections (1993) and the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage (1990) will be followed.
- 9.2 The site archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service.
- 83 With the consent of the landowner, the site finds will be deposited with a local museum prepared to accept the material.

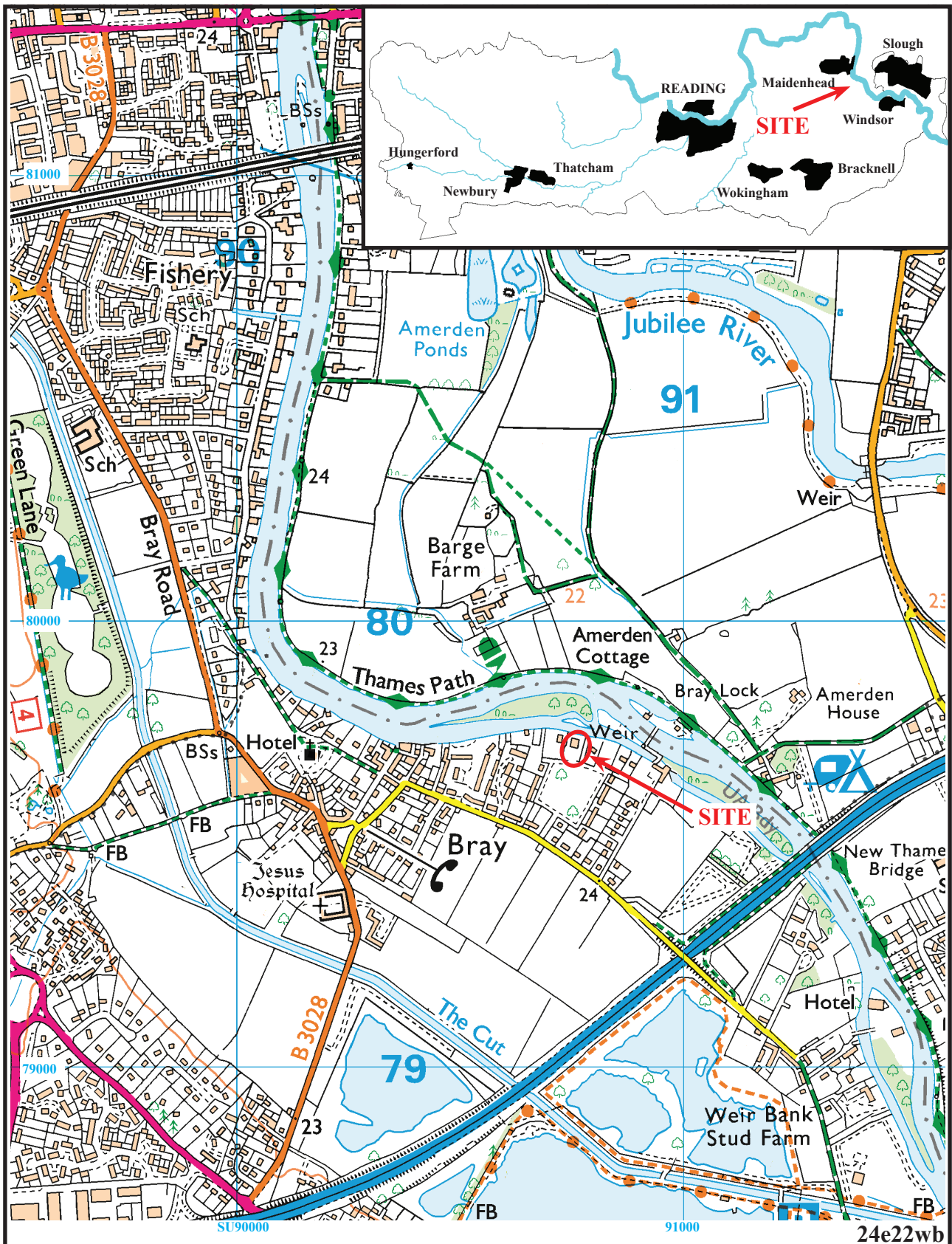
## **9.0 General Items**

- 9.1 The project will be managed on a regular basis by a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists with an appropriate area of competence (S. Ford, J. Pine, A Taylor). The fieldwork will be supervised and carried out by staff of other categories of membership of the CIFA.
- 9.2 The project will be carried out in accordance with the CIFA Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs (2020b), Code of Conduct (2019), and the quality control mechanisms set out in the TVAS fieldwork and post-fieldwork manuals.
- 9.3 Safe working practices will be adopted as set out in the TVAS health and safety manual and current health and safety standards will be adhered to.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 The fieldwork and post-fieldwork will be monitored by the archaeological officer to the council and all reasonable access will be provided to the works. When possible, a minimum of 5 days' notice will be issued to Berkshire Archaeology ahead of works starting in order to provide an opportunity to visit the site during the works. Any changes in the agreed project design will be discussed and agreed with the archaeological officer before implementation.

## **10.0 References**

- Astill, G G, 1978, *Historic towns in Berkshire; an archaeological appraisal*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 2 Reading

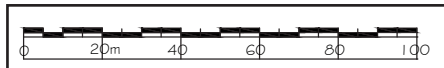
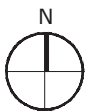
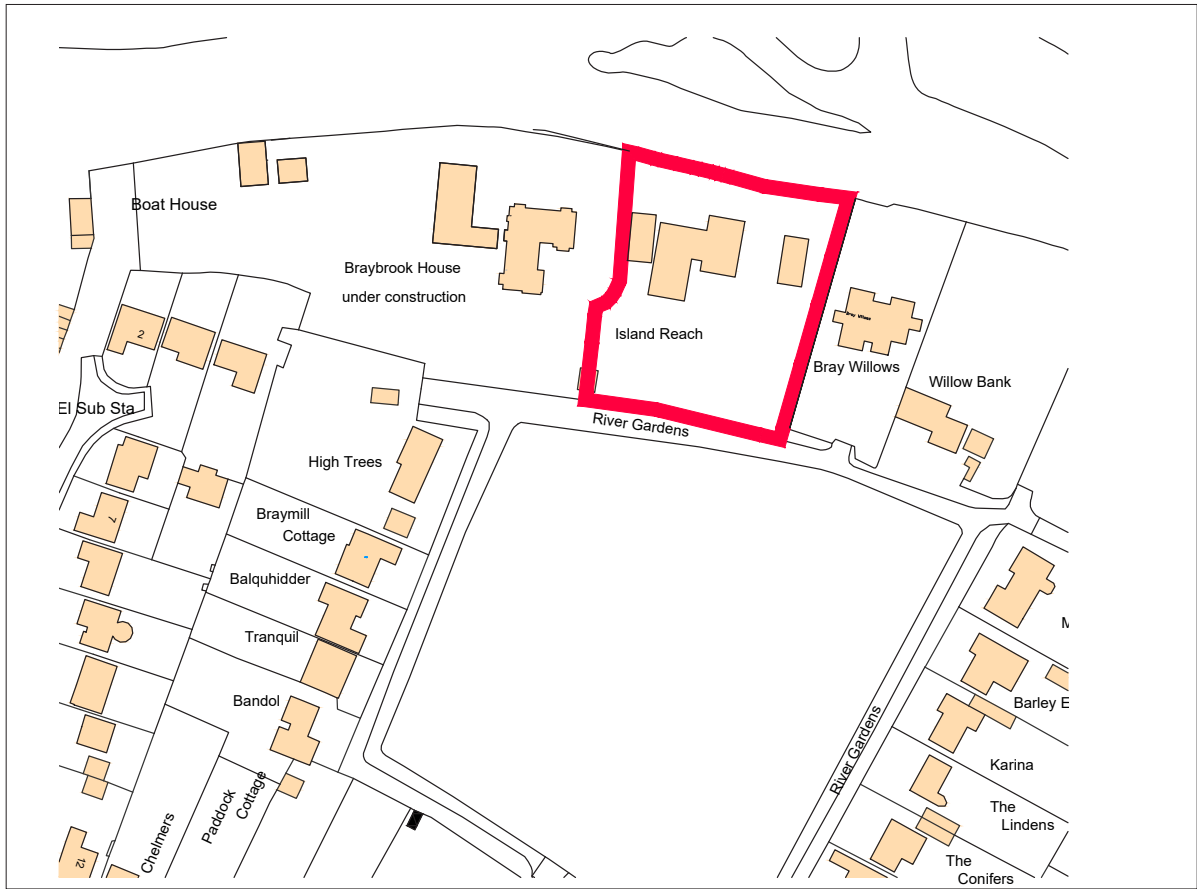
- CIfA, 2022, Code of Conduct, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading
- CIfA, 2020a, Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading
- CIfA, 2020b, Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Reading
- Dils, J and Yates, M, 2013, *An Historical Atlas of Berkshire*, Berkshire Record Society, Eynsham
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap **1**, Reading
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley; an archaeological survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ **1**, Reading
- Jenkins, P, 2002, New Wet Dock, Somerville, Bray Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 02/26, Reading
- HE, 2015a, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment, MoRPHE project planning*, Historic England, London
- HE 2015b, *Environmental Archaeology*, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines 1, Historic England, Portsmouth, 3rd edn
- HE 2017, *Research Agenda*, Historic England, London
- Mitchell, P D, and Brickley, M (eds), 2017, *Updated Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*, CIfA and BABAO, Reading
- NPPF 2023, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)



Island Reach, River Gardens, Bray,  
 Maidenhead, Berkshire  
 Proposal for an Archaeological Watching Brief  
 Figure 1. Location of site within Bray and Berkshire.

THAMES VALLEY  
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
 SERVICES

Reproduced under licence from Ordnance Survey Explorer Digital mapping at 1:12500  
 Crown Copyright reserved



24e22wb

**Island Reach, River Gardens, Bray, Berkshire  
Proposal for an Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES