

Rear of 10-11 Gun Street, Reading, Berkshire

Project specification for an archaeological recording action

17th September 2019



GSR15/180

Rear of 10-11 Gun Street, Reading, Berkshire

Proposal for an archaeological recording action

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission (191243 and 191244) has been sought from Reading Borough Council to extend the night club (Purple Turtle) at 7-9 Gun St by constructing a new building to the rear of 10-11 Gun St ((SU 7148 7327) (Figs. 1 and 2). Although preservation in-situ of archaeological deposits is to take place, some potential disturbance/destruction of below ground archaeological features may occur and a programme of archaeological investigation and monitoring is to be carried out.

1.2 The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of Reading and lies on what is thought to be one of the original medieval streets (Astill 1978). The town has late Saxon origins with the original Saxon town located somewhere close to St Mary's Church, which lies just to the north of the site. However, few deposits of Saxon date have yet been revealed. (Preston 2005; Ford et al 2003). The site lies within the boundary of the medieval and later town but with the southern portion of the site possibly extending into the former floodplain of the Holy Brook where water management and/or land reclamation deposits could be encountered.

1.3 Evaluation of the adjacent site to the west revealed medieval hearths and reclamation deposits (Ford 2003). A subsequent small scale recording action on that site recorded predominantly late post-medieval deposits with a few possible features of medieval or early post-medieval date along with a collection of residual medieval pottery (Pine 2013).

1.4 Evaluation of the site itself revealed a complex of medieval deposits comprising pits and chalk walls beneath later post-medieval remains (Pine 2010). Numbers 10 and 11 on the Gun Street frontage are listed buildings.

1.5 The proposal is to comprise a building with a floor level predominantly higher than the existing (Fig. 3). The floor is to comprise low-density piled foundations with a ground slab not generally needing pile caps and groundbeams. Strengthening of the Holybrook culvert is also to take place which will need deep excavation in part. Apart from the insertion of piles, invasive groundworks are expected to be minimal with only the culvert zone and possibly the northern (higher) end of the site requiring archaeological consideration.

1.6 Various proposals for the site have been explored and several gained planning permission. In particular a scheme in 2012 was advanced and which was in essence the same as the current proposal. At that time a detailed mitigation strategy using the evaluation data was developed to demonstrate preservation in-situ could be achieved by a sympathetic design (Appendix 1). The principles of this approach have been enshrined in the current proposal. As such the majority of the archaeological fieldwork proposed can be considered as precautionary.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RECORDING ACTION

2.1 Background

A number of countrywide policy documents for archaeological research such as English Heritage Research Agendas (2005). More specific aims are presented in the Solent Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014).

2.2 General objectives

The general objectives of the project are to:

Record and excavate and record, all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the proposed development.

Produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site (in particular archaeomagnetic dating of fired structures).

Establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic, etc.

Produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

2.3 Specific research objectives

To establish a chronological framework for activity across the site.

What activities were taking place on the site?

Are there any specialised activities taking place on the site with relation to the resources offered by the nearby Holy Brook/ Kennet floodplain?

What is the date and nature of any reclamation deposits on the site?

Is there any Saxon occupation on the site and if so what is it's nature?

What is the nature of the medieval occupation on the site?

What is the nature and extent of any early post-medieval occupation on the site ?

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Site clearance

3.1.1 Demolition will take place down to slab level with no grubbing out of foundations nor removal of the slab. The ground slab will not be removed but will be largely left in-situ and only broken locally at pile locations, etc. (Fig. 3)

3.1.2 Archaeological monitoring/supervision of excavations will take place for any deeper areas of groundworks.

3.1.3 One of the accurately located pile locations to the south of the site in the vicinity of the Holy Brook but away from the party walls, will be subject to a borehole survey with the recovery of a column of samples using U100 tubes (or any other suitable system). The column samples will be taken from all deposits above bedrock (gravel/chalk). The samples will be assessed at Quest (Reading University). The results of the assessment will be used to inform the piling method, such as if polythene sleeves may need to be added to the piles.

3.2 Excavation methodology

3.2.1 All archaeological features will be planned and sectioned as a minimum objective.

3.2.2 Isolated, discrete features such as pits and postholes not belonging to structures or activities discussed in para 3.2.4 (below) will be half-sectioned as a minimum. Full excavation will take place if half sectioning fails to provide sufficient artefactual dating evidence.

3.2.3. Sampling of linear features such as ditches and gullies relating to agricultural activity will be 20% of their length with a minimum of 10m of each ditch being dug (excluding any large civil war earthwork). The linear features will be excavated in 1-3 m. wide slots. All termini and intersections will be examined. The civil war earthwork if encountered will be hand excavated by a single 1.5-2m wide slot with further slots being partially excavated with machine. This will be considered in consultation with the Berkshire Archaeological Officer.

3.2.4 Any deposits relating to funerary/ritual activities such as burials and cremation deposits and domestic/industrial activity such as walls, postholes floors, middens, walls, hearths, ring gullies) will be fully excavated. Discrete features such as cremation deposits will be 100% sampled for subsequent analysis.

3.2.5 Area deposits such as buried soils will be hand excavated to a minimum of 5%. Subsequent excavation by machine will be considered in consultation with the Berkshire Archaeological Officer.

3.2.6 Area deposits such as large, artefact-rich, prehistoric middens will be hand excavated to a minimum of 50%. Subsequent excavation by machine will be considered in consultation with the Berkshire Archaeological Officer.

3.2.7 Discovery of any human remains will be reported to the coroner and will be excavated following guidelines issued by the Ministry of Justice. Recovery and recording methodologies for human remains follow standard procedures identified by McKinley and Roberts (1993), Brickley and McKinley (2004) and TVAS Field Recording Manual (8th edition 2018). Any human bone recovered of archaeological significance will be deposited with the museum and will not be reinterred in earth.

3.3 Recording Methodology

3.3.1 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.

3.3.2 Plans and sections will be drawn in pencil on drafting film, normally at scales of 1:100, 1:20 and 1:10 respectively. Digital (GPS) planning may be employed. Where appropriate, eg for the recording of inhumations, more detailed plans will be drawn at a scale of 1:10. Plans and sections will be accurately located in relation to the National Grid. Overall plans at 1:100 will also be used.

3.3.3 Heights above OD will be taken and recorded on all plans and sections.

3.3.4 A Harris matrix stratification diagram will be employed to record all stratigraphic relationships.

3.3.5 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' to illustrate the nature of the archaeological fieldwork programme.

3.4 Finds Retrieval

3.4.1 In general, all identified finds and artefacts pre-dating 1750 will be retained. Samples of later material may be retained if of intrinsic interest or significant for dating purposes. All but a sample of most classes of building material will be discarded after recording but the specific guidance of the recipient museum collecting policy will be followed.

3.4.2 Metal detectors will be used to enhance the recovery of metal finds. It is proposed that this work will either 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, silver prehistoric base metal or other treasure will be reported to the Coroner and county finds liaison officer and kept in a secure place as required by the Treasure Act (1996) and its subsequent amendments.

3.4.3 Finds recovered from fills of cut features will be recorded under the appropriate context number.

3.4.4 All finds discovered in layers and surfaces will be recorded in two horizontal dimensions. This spatial distribution will generally be within a 1m grid square but for particularly sensitive areas a grid of 0.1m will be used. Three-dimensional recording will be used for significant finds such as chronologically distinctive metalwork.

3.4.5 According to our standard practice, features will be spot-dated by their finds on-site, so that any appropriate adjustment can be made to excavation or retrieval strategies in order to maximise the information available to answer the research aims of the project.

3.4.6 Conservation on site will follow guidelines in First Aid for Finds with any other specialist conservation work sub-contracted to the project conservator.

3.5 Environmental sampling and scientific dating

3.5.1 Well-defined, closely-dated contexts will be bulk sampled for the recovery of carbonised botanical remains (HE 2015b)

3.5.2 Sieving will take place to enhance the recovery of small bones and artefacts as advised by our faunal remains specialist. Provision is made for sampling 10-15 deposits. Up to 40 litres of their fill will be wet-sieved using a 2mm mesh. Charred plant remains will be recovered using floatation and a 0.25mm sieve. In addition, unusual and rich contexts will be sieved in a similar manner.

3.5.3 Bulk samples from dry contexts will be in the order of 40 litres except in cases where the volume of the features is below this threshold. Deposits of earlier prehistoric date (Neolithic/Bronze Age) will be sampled at 40 litres or above. Variations to sample volumes and collection strategies will be discussed on site with our palaeobotanical specialist and the Berkshire Archaeological Officer as necessary.

3.5.4 The presence of waterlogged deposits is unlikely and is only possible in very deep or large features. Should these be encountered the sampling strategy will be discussed with our environmental specialists and the County Archaeological Officer as necessary.

3.5.5 Samples for pollen analysis and micromorphology will be taken under the guidance of the appropriate specialists on-site if appropriate.

3.5.6 Where appropriate, samples will be taken for radiocarbon dating, dendrochronology, thermoluminescence, archaeomagnetic dating or for any other less common scientific analyses as necessary.

3.5.7 Provision is made for one radiocarbon determination should Saxon or prehistoric deposits be encountered.

4.0 POST-FIELDWORK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The scale of the expected fieldwork is expected to be small and no formal post-fieldwork assessment is proposed.

5.0 POST-EXCAVATION ANALYSIS AND ARCHIVE PREPARATION

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).

5.2 The aims of the post-fieldwork phase of the project are to:

5.3 Prepare an orderly archive of the records of the fieldwork.

5.4 Clean, conserve and prepare artefacts/ecofacts for long term museum storage.

5.5 Prepare specialist reports on the artefacts recovered. Particular attention will be paid to tying in the pottery recovered to the local or regional fabric sequences that are available. Metal finds will be x-rayed where appropriate to aid identification.

5.6 Prepare specialist reports on environmental studies.

5.7 Prepare a report describing the basic nature of the archaeological deposits discovered.

5.8 Draw together the information in sections 5.3-5.7 to place the site in its local, regional and national setting as appropriate.

5.9 The finds and site archive will be prepared in accordance with guidelines in MoRPHE (HE 2015a), CIfA guidance (CIfA 2014a) 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. The records will be copied onto microfiche and a copy sent to the National Archaeological Record.

5.10 The site and finds archive will be deposited in Reading Museum.

5.11 With the consent of the landowner, the site finds will be deposited with Reading Museum.

5.12 An electronic security copy of the field records will be made shortly after completion of the fieldwork.

5.13 A selection of digital images showing the site location and principal features will be provided to the Berkshire Archaeological Officer for educational and planning purposes if requested.

5.14 A digital (pdf) version will be supplied to Berkshire HER on the understanding that the report can be copied for *bona fide* research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. Non-published report(s) will be made available for inspection or download on the TVAS web site.

5.15 A digital version of the report will be provided to the OASIS project.

6.0 PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

6.1 Within 12-15 months of the completion of all fieldwork a comprehensive report to publication standard will be produced. This will comprise a descriptive text and illustrations of the stratigraphic sequence with its interpretation, catalogues, specialist reports, distribution plans of the finds, and any available environmental information followed by a discussion and interpretation of the results.

6.2 The findings will be published in an appropriate journal such as *Berkshire Archaeological Journal* or the TVAS monograph series.

6.3 A sum will be allocated within the resourcing of the project for full editing and publication costs.

7.0 PROJECT TEAM

Project Management	Dr. Steve Ford BA PhD MCIFA FSA, or Joanna Pine BA MSc MCIFA or Andy Taylor (BA MA, MCIFA)
Fieldwork director	(from) Andy Taylor, David Sanchez Kyle Beaverstock , Maisie Foster, Aidan Colyer, Andy Mundin, Jamie Williams, Jon Tierney or Will Attard
Pottery Specialist	Dr. Jane Timby, Luke Barber or Ms Sue Anderson (consultants)
Tile Specialist	Danielle Milbank (TVAS)
Struck Flint Specialist	Dr. Steve Ford (TVAS)
Stone Specialist	Dr. David Williams (Southampton University)
Metalwork Specialist	Dr David Dungworth (consultant) or Dr. Robin Taylor (consultant)
Carbonised Plant Remains	Professor Mark Robinson (University of Oxford) or Rossy McKenna (consultant)
Mollusc Remains	Professor Mark Robinson, (University of Oxford)
Faunal Remains	Ms Sheila Hamilton-Dyer or Dr Matilda Holmes (consultants)
Human Remains	Dr Ceri Falys (TVAS)
Pollen Remains	Mr D Young (Quest, Reading University)
Soil Micromorphology	Ms Sarah Elliot (Quest, Reading University)
Radiocarbon dating	Queens University, Belfast
Archaeomagnetic dating	Josh Hargreaves (TVAS)/ Bradford University
Conservation	Wiltshire County Council Conservation Centre

8.0 GENERAL ITEMS

8.1 Health and Safety

All site operations will be carried out in a safe manner in accordance with TVAS health and safety policy and current Health and Safety legislation. A risk assessment will be prepared before commencement on site.

8.2 Timetable

Supervised overburden stripping and fieldwork and post-fieldwork is expected to take place on day rates.

8.3 Professional standards

The project will be carried out in accordance with the CIFA Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation (2014b) and Code of Conduct (2014c) and the quality control mechanisms set out in the TVAS fieldwork and post-fieldwork manuals.

8.4 Insurance Cover

Insurance cover comprises £10m for public liability, £10m for employee liability, cover for any hired-in plant and professional indemnity cover for £5m.

8.5 Reinstatement

Not Applicable

8.6 Press Release

Should any significant archaeological deposits be located, a press release will be prepared in consultation with the Berkshire Archaeological Officer and the client.

8.7 Monitoring

The fieldwork and post-fieldwork will be monitored by the archaeological advisor to the Borough Council (Berkshire Archaeology) and all reasonable access will be provided to the works. The archaeological advisor to the Borough Council will be contacted both prior to work commencing on site, and during the recording action itself, to arrange a site monitoring visit.

9.0 REFERENCES

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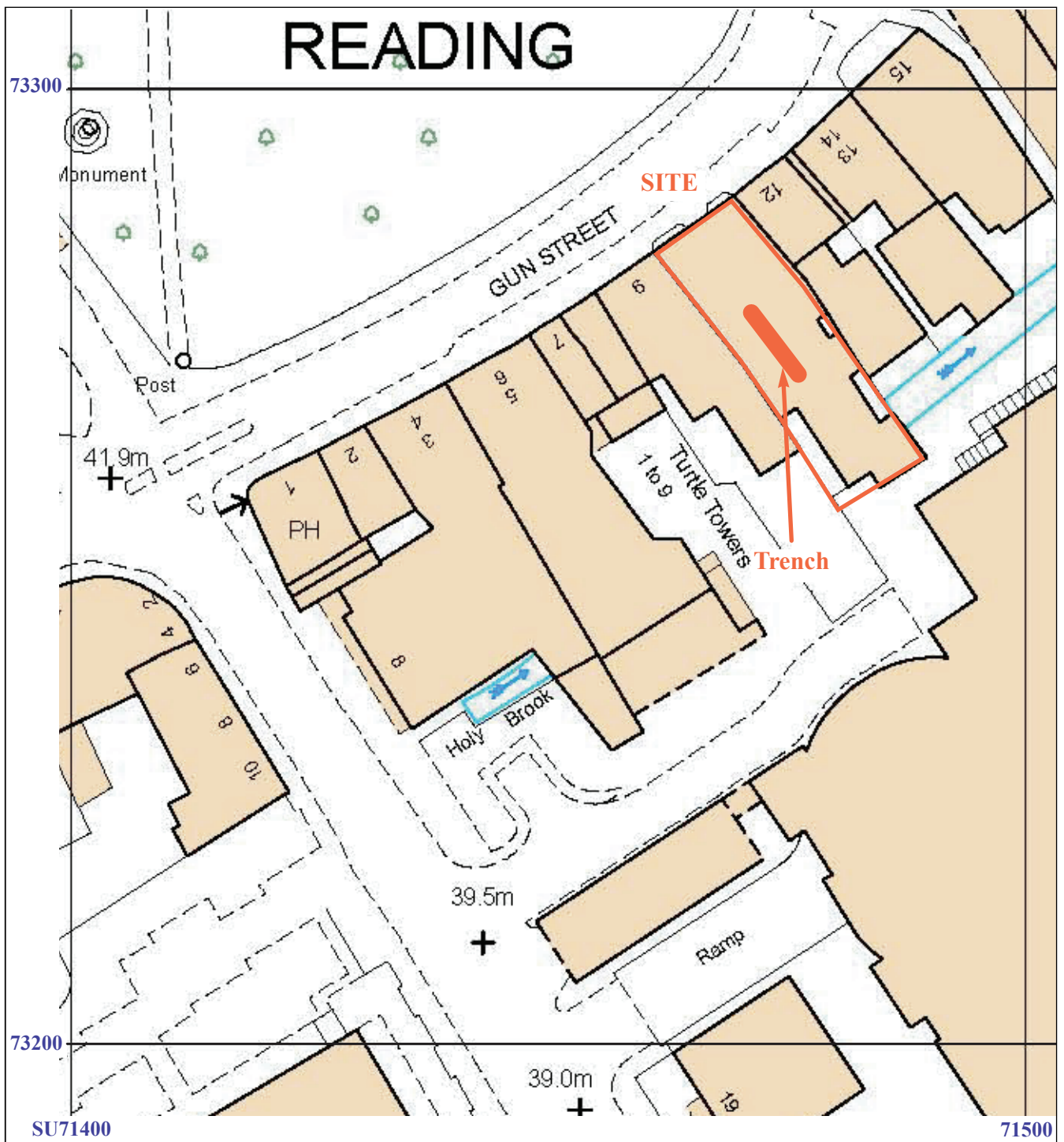


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**Rear of 10-11 Gun Street, Reading, Berkshire
Proposal for an archaeological excavation**

Fig. 1. Location of site in Reading

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**Rear of 10-11 Gun Street, Reading, Berkshire
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Fig. 2. Detailed location of site and previous evaluation trench

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Fig. 3. Detailed plan of proposed pile locations and sections.



TVAS Ltd
47-49 De Beauvoir Road
READING
RG1 5NR
Tel: (0118) 9260552
Fax: (0118) 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Website: www.tvas.co.uk

Offices in
Reading (Head Office)
Brighton (TVAS South)
Ennis (TVAS Ireland)

10-11 Gun Street, Reading Planning Application 12/00939/EXT, Condition 9
Proposed mitigation of the impact of development on archaeological heritage
12th October 2012

By Steve Ford

Background

1) Field-derived information

An evaluation (trial trenching) has been carried out on the site as agreed with the archaeological advisor to the council to provide direct information about the archaeological potential of the site and allow a mitigation strategy to be designed (Pine 2009). This was carried out in accordance with the archaeological mitigation strategy of 11/8/2009 referred to in condition 9(i). In particular, information on the depth at which archaeological deposits were buried by modern made ground was gained. The evaluation carried out sufficient digging to characterise the archaeology, but importantly, without unnecessary extra digging which would have compromised any meaningful opportunity for preservation in-situ. Approximately 7.5% of the developable part of the site area has been evaluated. Evaluation also took place previously on the adjacent property (rear of 7-9 Gun Street c. 13m to the west) and both sites provide a good model of archaeology in this location.

2) Legislation/policy

Local and national government policies and guidance stress the desire for preservation in-situ of archaeological deposits as the optimum response irrespective of whether they are exceptional or ordinary. It is contended that the circumstances of this development proposal are ideal for preservation in-situ to be achieved.

3) Guidance

Guidance on the topic of preservation in-situ and its achievement with a degree of acceptable loss (which enables the remainder to be preserved) have been provided by English Heritage's (*Piling and Archaeology* 2007). The recommendations of this document have been adopted in the approach to this mitigation proposal.

4) Proposals

Various foundation designs have been considered but rejected. A slab design cannot be employed due to differential settling relative to the adjacent building it is intended to extend. Traditional strip foundations may work but are objectionable on archaeological grounds. Piling is the preferred solution.

In the first instance, the foundation design is to comprise augured (replacement) piles, with the concrete ground floor slab to be positioned *above* the level of the existing slab. There are no pile caps or ground beams *sensu stricto* nor lift pits, nor crane bases nor any other deeply invasive foundations. There is therefore just one impact of the foundation design that needs to be addressed, namely the piles themselves.

The evaluation trench showed that beneath the old slab, a considerable thickness of brick rubble (deposit 152 on evaluation report figure 5 - 0.5m at the NW end 0.8m at the SE end) overlay further modern (19th/20th century) levels. Deposits of archaeological interest, namely late post-medieval and earlier levels (on evaluation report figure 5 - deposits 69, 55, 54, 70, 75) lie below at a depth c. 1.1m SE, 0.85m NW.

To put the figures set out below into a practical archaeological, context, a pile with a diameter of 300mm is about the size that a shovel or spade can just fit into (but without being able to remove the soil!), which is clearly a size that cannot be archaeologically excavated without the digging of a much larger trench to gain access. In this instance, as the evaluation results have demonstrated the archaeological damage from the pile would only take place at a depth below the 1-1.5m of modern brick rubble and 19th century levels on the site.

The piles

There are some 38 piles on the upper part of the site (ie north of the Holy Brook) (see appended plan). The piles will be augured and not driven, which is the most preferable pile type (English Heritage *Piling and Archaeology* 2007, 13).

They are 300mm in diameter with an area of 0.0707 sq m each

Their total area is $0.0707 \times 38 = 2.686$ sq m

Expressed as percentage of the site area (c. 171sq m) this equates to 1.57%.

[If one allows for a 20mm zone of contact damage around each pile thus increasing the diameter to 340mm, the pile area would be 0.0908 sq m and the total area $0.0908 \times 38 = 3.451$ sq m or 2.02% of the site area]

This figure is well under the 5% 'acceptable loss' that was, until fairly recently a baseline figure (EH 2007,17). More significantly, it is also at or under the 2% 'acceptable loss' that is a figure currently considered as both desirable and achievable by modern foundation designs. To me, (and others) the unrecorded loss of 1.57% (or even 2%) of the site archaeology is a price well worth paying to preserve in-situ the remaining 98.43% of the site's archaeology.

Pile clusters?

There is some valid concern that piles grouped to form dense clusters, compromise the intervening archaeological deposits due to a 'loss of legibility' of what is nominally preserved in-situ. This issue has more credence with large (450mm) diameter piles with 1m or less centres (eg EH 2007, 19 fig. 2). However, for this site, the small size of the piles coupled with pile centres at 1m does not form such a marked grouping of piles that 'loss of legibility' is a potential problem.

5) Mitigation- Pile probing/obstructions (Conditions 9iia and 9 iii)

The evaluation trenching recorded that there were both 19th century brick walls and medieval flint walls on the site and it is possible that at some pile locations similar remains may be encountered which may prove to be obstacles to piling. It is also considered by the council that the preservation of archaeologically relevant masonry structures has a higher priority than adjacent soft deposits with respect to piling damage, however minimal. This possible problem has been previously encountered such as in the historic city of Winchester, where, because of the longer chronology with Roman as well as late Saxon and Medieval structural remains present, these pile obstructions can be found at considerable depth. On such sites, including one in which we provided advice, the proposed positions of the piles was tested by probing beforehand to ensure that the piles could be drilled as intended with out damage to deeply buried structural remains.

As such, at Gun Street, it is proposed that in advance of piling, each pile location will be accurately marked out and will be probed to locate any obstructions. The probing is to comprise the driving in of a small diameter rod or tube (such as a scaffolding tube) using a machine to both insert it and remove it. If obstructions are found there are two alternative ways of proceeding depending on the specific details of a pile location:

a) If obstructions are found at shallow depth (ie at or above the late post-medieval / rubble levels on the site, but accounting for the slope towards the Holy Brook), then it is likely that these obstructions are also of late post-medieval/modern date. These obstructions could be broken out in a sondage dug under archaeological supervision.

b) If obstructions (probable masonry structural elements) are found at greater depth, these are likely to be of archaeological interest. It is proposed that, in consultation with the structural engineer, one or more positions nearby would be probed in order for an alternative, unobstructed pile position to be found.

6) Mitigation- palaeoenvironmental potential (Condition 9iib)

One of the accurately located pile locations to the south of the site in the vicinity of the Holy Brook but away from the party walls, will be subject to a borehole survey with the recovery of a column of samples using U100 tubes (or any other suitable system). The column samples will be taken from all deposits above bedrock (gravel/chalk). The samples will be assessed by Mr. Dan Young at Quest (Reading University). The results of the assessment will be used to inform the piling method, such as if polythene sleeves may need to be added to the piles.

7) Mitigation- Holy Brook culvert reconstruction (Condition 9i)

During refurbishment of the Holy Brook culvert, a watching brief will be maintained should any deposits of archaeological interest be exposed and/or need to be removed. This work can only take place during the actual groundworks.