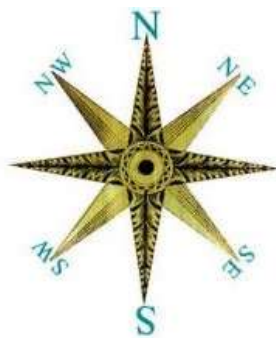


WENSLEY ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE, RG1 6EA

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT



COMPASS



ARCHAEOLOGY

JANUARY 2020

WENSLEY ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE, RG1 6EA

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

NGR (APPROX. CENTRE): SU 70072 71960

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Abstract

In November 2019 Compass Archaeology were commissioned to conduct an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (DBA) on the site at Wensley Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 6EA. The DBA was in support of a planning application to construct 46 new homes, re-configure the parking courts and mews', improve the central amenity space, and preserve and enhance the landscape features.

During the course of this DBA it has been demonstrated that the site lies within a historically and archaeologically significant landscape, with evidence of activity dating from the prehistoric period to the present day. The site of the proposed development at Wensley Road holds a medium potential for prehistoric remains, due to worked flints dating from the Palaeolithic to Neolithic periods being recorded in the area as well as the Early to Middle Iron Age settlement found c.650m north-west of the study site. The study site area may have been seasonally occupied as the banks of the River Kennet and the Holy Brook channel flood intermittently.

For the Roman period the potential for encountering remains is low as occupation was likely to be focused north-east towards the River Thames and the town of Reading. The study site is thought to be located east of the projected line of the Roman road connecting the town of Calleva Atrebatum, now known as Silchester, to Verulamium, now known as St. Albans. This route may have also been important in the Iron Age, with Iron Age phases recorded at Silchester.

It is thought that the site holds a low potential for Saxon archaeological remains, as the site lay between three settlements which are thought to have existed in the Saxon period. Reading was a relatively large settlement, which saw Viking campsites and battles. In addition to Reading, the Domesday Survey also lists Southcote and Whitley as two settlements near the study site. The study site itself was most likely an area of uninhabited land between the nearby settlements, possibly covered by forest or cleared and used for agriculture.

There is a medium potential for encountering medieval and post-medieval remains during the groundworks for the proposed development. Documentary and cartographic sources show that the study site was partly within the Coley Park Estate, which was owned by the Vachell family from 1309 until 1727 when it was passed through several landholders and was eventually divided and sold to the Reading Corporation in 1956. Houses and three 15-storey blocks of flats were built on the study site by 1960, which are still present. As the study site was located at the far west end of the Coley Park Estate, if medieval and post-medieval remains are encountered they are likely to relate to the woodland area, the estate's boundary, buried cultivation soils and residual finds.

Due to the medium potential for encountering prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval finds and features, and in light of the total loss of any potential archaeological remains through the foundations of the proposed new buildings, some form of archaeological mitigation may be required. It is suggested that this mitigation could take the form of an appropriately worded condition attached to an approved planning consent, rather than any pre-determined action.

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Figs. 33-34 adapted from material produced by HTA Design 2020.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document forms a summary of the findings of an archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) conducted on Wensley Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 6EA (fig. 1).

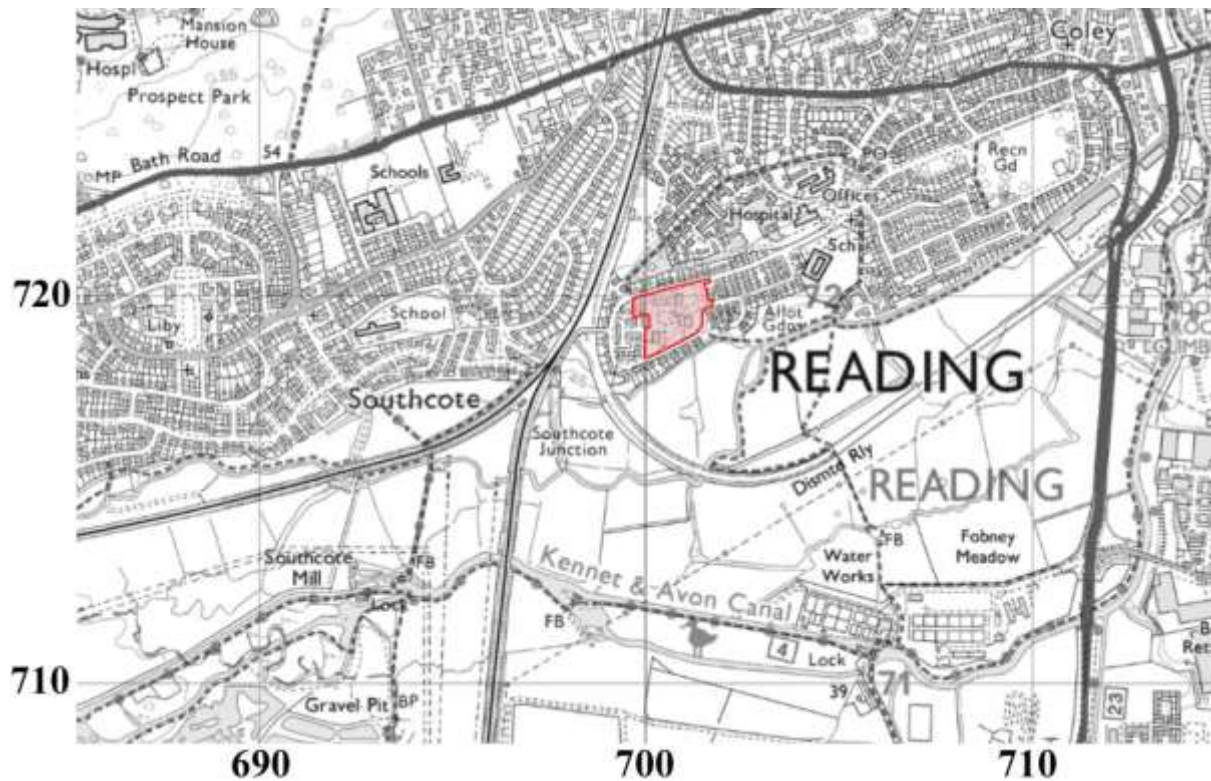


Figure 1: Site location, marked in red

- 1.2 The DBA has been commissioned in support of a planning application to develop the site by constructing 46 new homes consisting of a mixture of houses and flats, re-configuring the parking courts and mews', improving the central amenity space, and preserving the landscape features.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 2.1 Compass Archaeology would like to thank David Greetham (Gleeds) for commissioning Compass to conduct the DBA on behalf of the Client, Reading Borough Council. Thank you also to Ruth Heyes (HTA Design LLP) for providing documents and information for the proposed development.

We would also like to thank the staff at the Berkshire Record Office for their assistance in sourcing historical material and providing information about the area.

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objective of this assessment is to establish the archaeological potential of the study site within the context of the proposed development. This takes into account three principle essentials:

- Reference to the known archaeological and documentary background
- Consideration of the impact of previous land use and development on potential archaeology
- Potential impact of the proposed development

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The assessment has been carried out in accordance with Historic England guidelines, (Historic England, 2015), and the recommendations of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, (CIfA 2014).

4.2 A visit was made to the site in December 2019 by Compass Archaeology and a comprehensive photographic survey undertaken. The archives at the Berkshire Record Office were consulted. In addition, entries held by the Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record were examined. Material held by Compass Archaeology was also utilised. References to the various sources were noted, and relevant material photocopied/scanned or photographed as appropriate.

A search of the Berkshire Historic Environment Record was made of the study area focused on *SU 70072 71960*. The results of the search are considered in more detail in Section 7.

4.3 The results of these investigations have thus been collated to produce this document, which forms a summary of the known archaeological potential for the site, the possible impact of any prior land-use upon that potential, and the perceived impact that the current proposal may have on any surviving potential.

5 ARCHAEOLOGY, THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

5.1.1 This desktop assessment represents one element in the archaeological planning process whereby early consideration of potential archaeological remains can be achieved, and if necessary appropriate further mitigation measures put in place. The report conforms to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF), adopted in March 2012 and updated in 2019, which replaces PPS 5 '*Planning for the Historic Environment*' and policies HE6 and HE7.

5.1.2 The NPPF (2019) contains 16 core principles that dictate plan-making and decision-taking; one of which concerns the preservation and enhancement of heritage assets (Section 16 paragraphs 184-202).

5.1.3 The NPPF recognises that heritage assets, defined in Annex 2 as *a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions*, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset

includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (LPA) (including local listing).

- 5.1.4** Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, the LPA should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail supplied by the applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.
- 5.1.5** The NPPF also directs the LPA to require development sites with known heritage assets, or potential heritage assets with archaeological interest to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, field evaluation.
- 5.1.6** Archaeological interest is defined as *a heritage asset which holds or potentially could hold evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point*. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
- 5.1.7** In considering any planning application for development, the LPA will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, current Development Plan Policy and other material considerations.

5.2 Local Policy

- 5.2.1** Due to the site's location within an area of archaeological sensitivity the following policies, taken from the current Reading Borough Council's *Local Plan* (Adopted November 2019) are deemed relevant:

Policy EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include:

- *Listed Buildings;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Scheduled Monuments;*
- *Historic parks and gardens; and*
- *Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List.*

Policy EN2: AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Applicants should identify and evaluate sites of archaeological significance by consulting the Historic Environment Record. This will require an assessment of the archaeological impacts of development proposals to be submitted before the planning

application is determined. Planning permission will not be granted in cases where the assessment of the archaeological impacts is inadequate.

Where remains cannot be preserved 'in situ,' remains should be properly excavated, investigated and recorded. This will require adequate provision for the identification, investigation, recording and publication of the archaeological resource. Where appropriate, Section 106 agreements will be negotiated to protect, enhance and interpret archaeological remains.

Development proposals which will have an adverse effect on scheduled monuments and other nationally important archaeological remains and their settings will not be allowed unless there is clear and convincing justification in the form of overriding public benefits.

- 5.3** The study site is not within an Area of Archaeological Priority designated by Reading Borough Council, nor is it within a Conservation Area. The Reading Borough *Local Plan Proposals Map* (Page E, 2019) shows that the site is near an Area of Archaeological Priority, several Areas of Identified Biodiversity Interest, and the Kennet and Holy Brook Meadows Major Landscape Feature (fig.2).
- 5.4** The site is not a Scheduled Ancient Monument and will not affect any. There are also no Listed Buildings within or immediately adjacent to the study site.

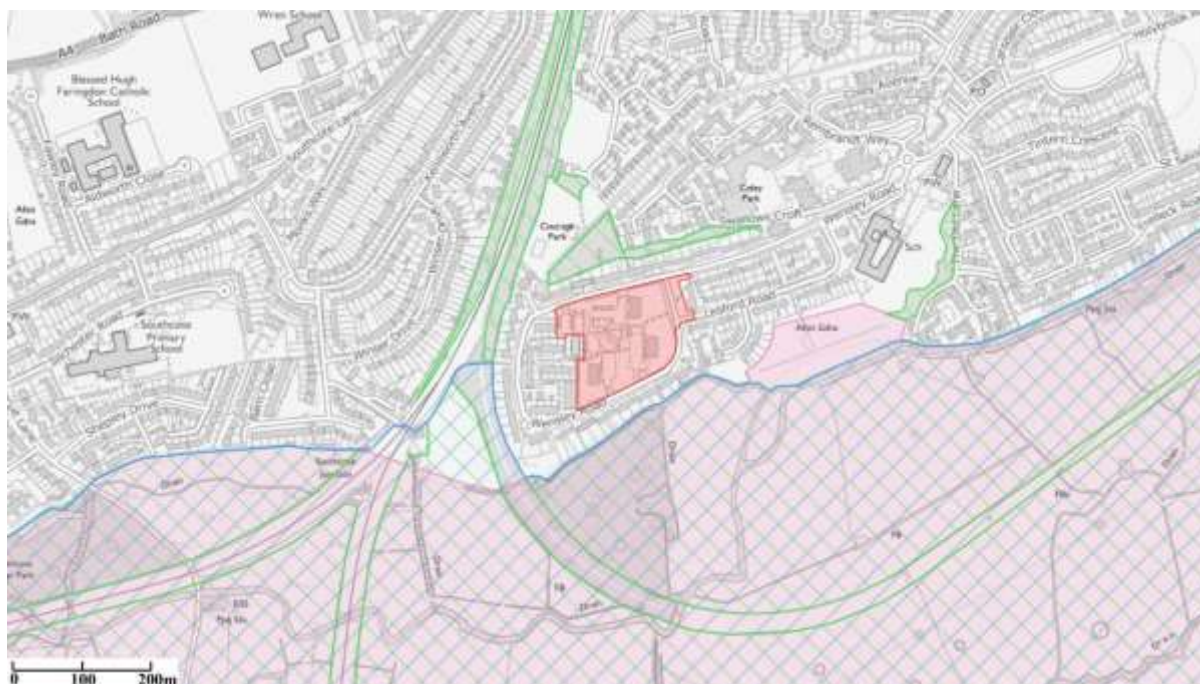


Figure 2: The site (red) in relation to an Area of Archaeological Priority (pink), Areas of Identified Biodiversity Interest (green), and the Kennet and Holy Brook Meadows Major Landscape Feature (blue)

6 SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 6.1** The study site lies within the Coley Park area of Reading. The site is situated within a loop of Wensley Road, and part of Lesford Road to the east (fig.3). To the immediate west of the study site, residential houses also within the Wensley Road loop border the site. The Great Western Railway line runs north-west of the study site. The site comprises three 15-storey blocks of flats – Wensley, Irving and Riversley Courts – part of Wensley Road and Lesford Road, car parks, garages, an electrical substation, a water tank and public/semi non-designated green space and verges.



Figure 3: Site outline, marked in red

- 6.2** The study site is irregular in plan, accessed via Wensley Road to the east. The area totals approximately 23,685.2m².
- 6.3** According to the British Geological Survey (Sheet 268: *Reading*) the site lies within an area of Lambeth Group, which is clay mottled in part with beds of sand and shelly clay, which sits on a Chalk Group (fig.4). There are several outcroppings of Lynch Hill Gravel located to the north of the study site and the alluvial deposit to the south demarcates the extent of Holy Brook – a channel of the River Kennet – and River Kennet itself extending south.

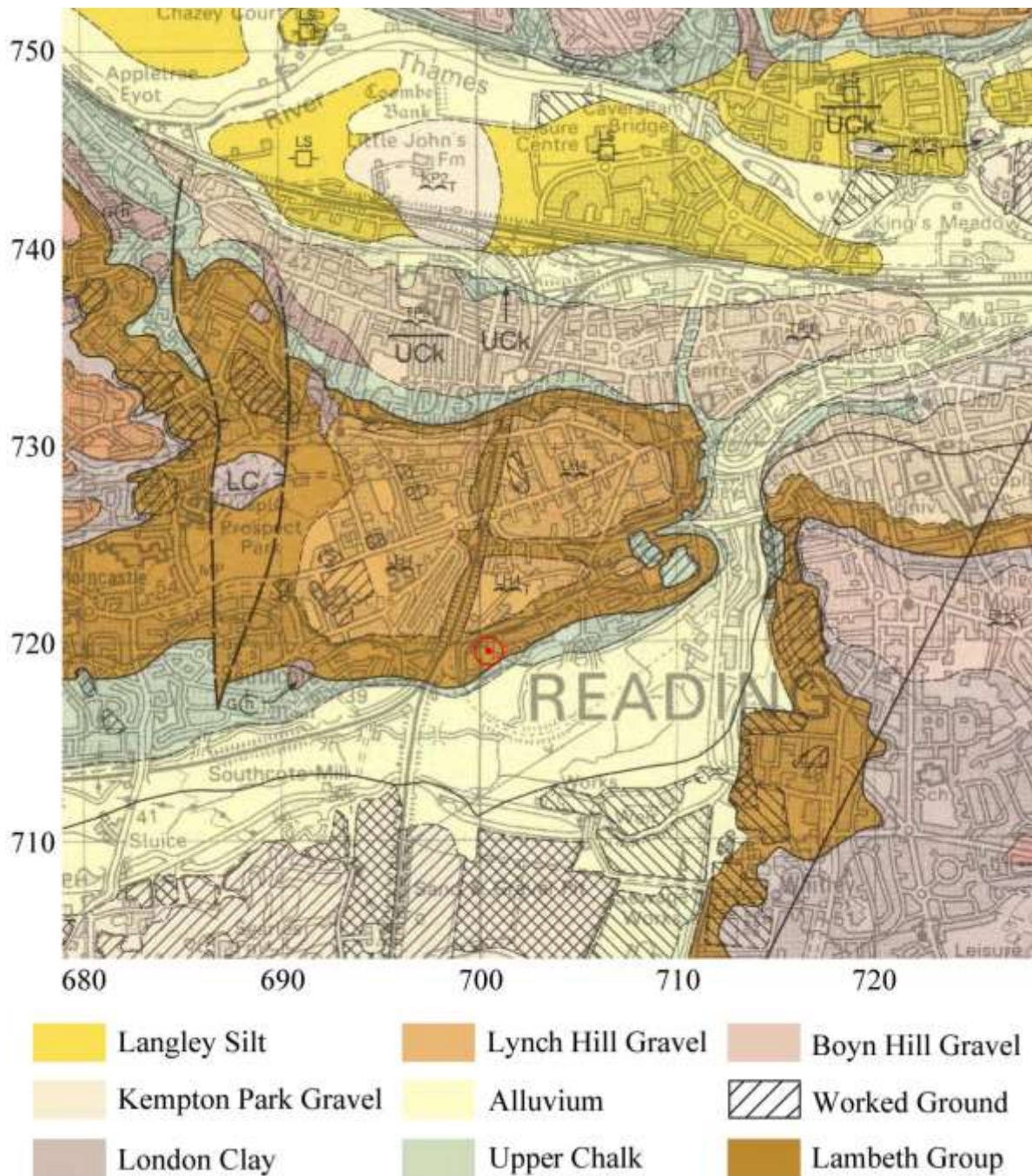


Figure 4: Extract from the British Geological Survey, Sheet 268

- 6.4** The site sits on relatively uneven ground, at approximately 48.5m OD at the north-east corner of the site where the Wensley Road splits into the loop. Moving clock-wise around the Wensley Road loop the site slopes downward towards the south-east corner, at approximately 42m OD. The site rises again towards the south-west corner, at c.46m OD. The north-west corner is the highest area of the site, at approximately 49.5m OD.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

7.1 The following section is drawn from a survey of the Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record (HER) and should be read in conjunction with Figures 5-9 below. It will consider the evidence of activity and occupation which has occurred in the area surrounding and within the study site. Finds recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme's (PAS) database are also referred to, which fall within the four figure NGRs SU6971, SU7071, SU6972 and SU7072.

A search of the HER produced a total of 30 relevant Monument and Event records within a 750m search radius of the site location, using SU 70072 71960 as the site centre. These Monument and Event records display the distribution of archaeological material and relevant above and below ground features recovered from within the vicinity of the study site, illustrating the wider historic and archaeological landscape. The results cover a range of material – including extant structures and documentary and antiquarian records. They are discussed in chronological order by period below.

7.2 Prehistoric

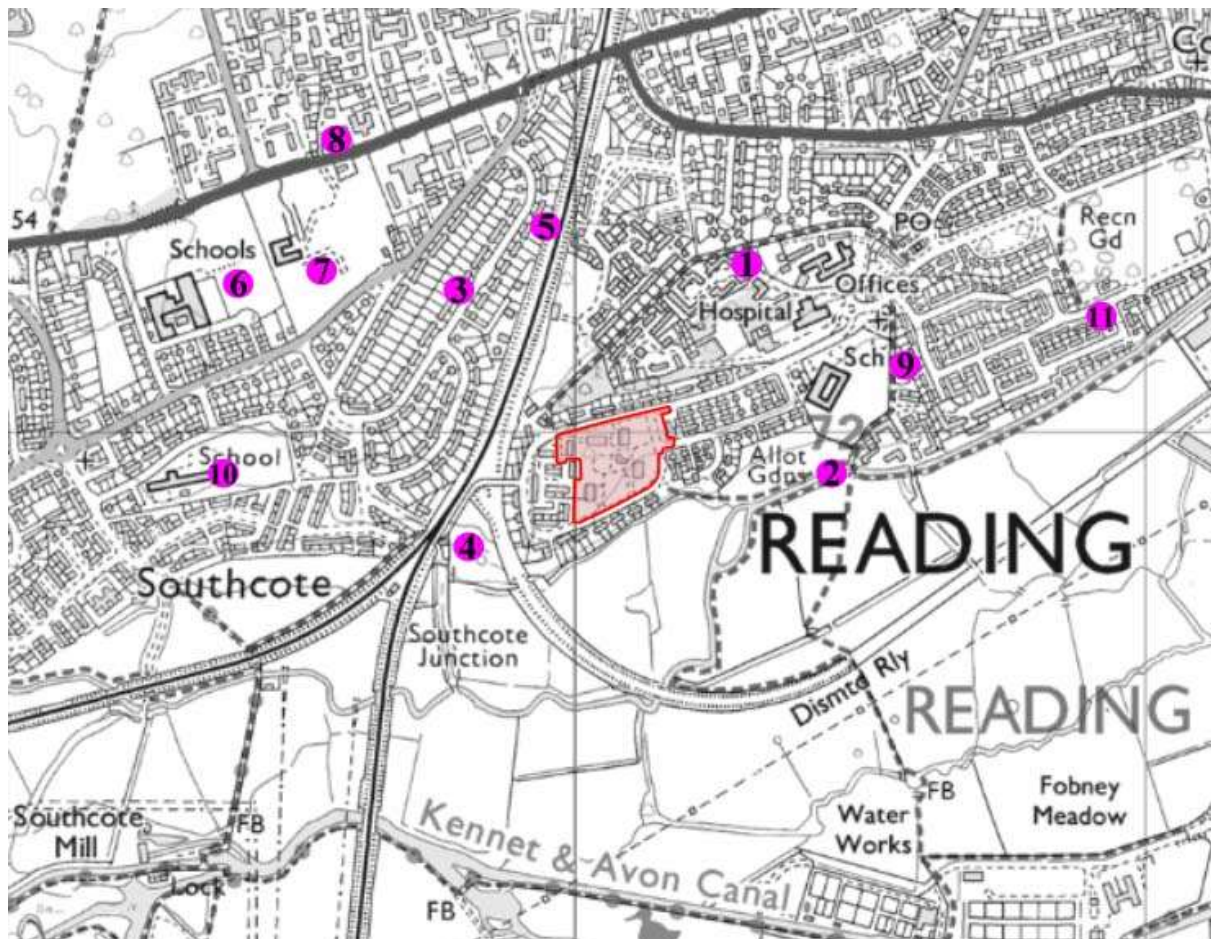


Figure 5: Distribution of prehistoric HER entries (pink) in relation to the site location (red)

No.	Mon. UID	SU Ref.	Description	References
1	00980.00.000 - MRD9045	703 723	Coley Hill. A Palaeolithic flake and a side scraper were recovered from the gravel terrace on Coley Hill. These came from one of the sites where palaeoliths were first discovered in Reading in 1879.	Wymer, J, J. 1968. Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology in Britain-as represented by the Thames Valley. Page 160. Peake, H. 1931. The Archaeology of Berkshire. Page 219.
2	02036.00.000 - MRD3879	70450 71930	Holy Brook, Coley. Two Mesolithic blades and a blade-like flake were found on a spoil heap of dredging from the Holy Brook.	Reading Museum Records: 10/10/72 OS SU 77 SW AB5
3	01708.00.000 - MRD10520	69790 72260	50 Kenilworth Avenue. A broken, ground stone axe and scrapers were found. Dated to the Neolithic period. Described as broken and re-chipped siltstone. Found in 1937.	1938. <i>Berkshire Archaeological Journal</i> . Page 26. 1971-2. <i>Berkshire Archaeological Journal</i> . Page 130.
4	01705.00.000 - MRD10516	698 718	Coley Park. A flint scraper and a patinated flake were found in the sand pit at the western end of Coley Park.	1961. <i>Berkshire Archaeological Journal</i> . page 57
5	01696.00.000 - MRD10507	69920 72400	11 Kenilworth Avenue. A waste flint flake was found in 1966.	Reading Museum Record Book: 28/6/6/67
6	01678.00.000 - MRD3671 01678.01.000 - MRD3672 01678.02.000 - MRD3673	69410 72260	Denton's Pit, Southcote. An early Iron Age settlement site was discovered in a gravel pit at Southcote, Reading in 1933. Whilst workmen were cutting back the face of the pit, they noticed V-shaped trenches filled with earth and "rubbish", which included Iron Age pottery sherds Excavations found nine or ten pits of various size and shape, along with quantities of pot sherds; lumps of fired clay; rubbing stones and parts of querns; carbonised wood, bones of large mammals and calcined flint. The pits were thought to be too small for permanent habitation and may have been used for storage purposes. One pit, however, was said to be 10-12 feet long and 5-6 feet wide. This pit contained "occupation" levels	1937. Proceedings Prehistoric Society. 3. Pages 43 – 57. Berkshire Archaeological Society. 1933. <i>Berkshire Archaeological Journal</i> . 37. Pages 83 - 84

			and pottery and might have been a pit dwelling	
7	MRM18224 ERM1909 ERM2158 MRM18416 MRM18417 MRM18418 MRM18419 MRM18420 MRM18413 MRM18415	69516 72268 6952 7227 6952 7224	Former Elvian School, Southcote Lane. Archaeological investigations revealed phases of Iron Age settlement activity from the 5th century BC to perhaps the 1 st century BC/AD consisting of ten ring gullies (roundhouses) several with multiple re-buildings, along with two enclosures, a trackway and fence line, and pits and postholes. A single narrow flake of possible Mesolithic date was found at the former Elvian School, Southcote Lane, Southcote, Reading during an archaeological excavation. A single Middle Bronze Age ditch [2017] was revealed, cut by a later Iron Age roundhouse gully. A small collection of flint work of possible Neolithic or Bronze Age date was also recovered from the site. The struck flint comprised of eight flakes, three narrow flakes (probably accidental by-products of flint knapping), two spalls, a hammer stone and a tested nodule with two removals. The collection is not chronologically distinctive but is probably of Neolithic or Bronze Age date and indicates activity of this period within the area.	Thames Valley Archaeological Services. 2016. Former Elvian School, Southcote Lane, Southcote Archaeological Evaluation. Thames Valley Archaeological Services. 2018. An Early to Middle Iron Age Settlement at the Former Elvian School Reading Berkshire. Occasional Paper 27. Pages 3, 29 and 33.
8	01742.00.000 - MRD10618	696 725	Parkhurst Lodge, Bath Road. The excavation of a drainage tunnel beneath the Bath Road near Parkhurst Lodge revealed the junction of undisturbed well bedded gravel terrace. In the gravel spoil from the tunnel eight primary flakes and one proto-hand-axe were found.	1958. Berkshire Archaeological Journal. 56. Page 57. Wymer, J, J. 1968. Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology in Britain-as represented by the Thames Valley. Page 152.
9	MRM15970	7057 7210	The Old Lane, Coley. A prehistoric struck flint was recovered from the spoil during an archaeological evaluation at Bucknell House, The Old Lane, Coley. It is not closely datable but is likely to be of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.	Thames Valley Archaeological Services. 2006. Bucknell House, The Old Lane, Coley, Reading, Berkshire - An

				Archaeological Evaluation.
10	MRM17616 ERM1611	69373 71928	Southcote Primary School. A single undated posthole, a sherd of black sand tempered Iron Age pottery and a broken flake of probable Neolithic or Bronze Age date were revealed during an archaeological evaluation.	Thames Valley Archaeological Services. 2014. Southcote Primary School, Silchester Road, Southcote, Reading, Berkshire - Archaeological Evaluation.
11	MRM18229	709 722	A large lower Palaeolithic flint flake was found in a back garden at Baydon Drive. According to local sources the clay makeup of the gardens was imported from Elgar Road, Reading in the 1930's when the houses were built.	Wymer J. 1999. The Lower Paleolithic of Britain. Dr. Rob Hosfield. 2017. Flint flake - 28 Baydon Drive, Reading.

7.2.1 The area surrounding the study site would have been heavily forested during the earlier prehistoric period. The site's location near the River Kennet would have made it an ideal location for early prehistoric communities, with the floodplains providing resources. Though long-term occupation in the area is unlikely due to the intermittent flooding of the river banks, thus the area may have been occupied on a seasonal basis. Several worked flints from the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods have been found, scattered across the HER search area, including Palaeolithic flint flakes (HER entries 1 and 11) and Mesolithic blades and flakes (HER entries 2 and 7). Two Mesolithic axes were also found near the River Kennet c.1km south-east of the study site. The presence of these finds indicates there was a relatively moderate level of activity in the area during the earlier prehistoric periods, with people utilising the landscape for riverine and forest resources.

7.2.2 Neolithic activity may have been similar to proceeding periods, with occupation occurring at certain times of the year and leaving little trace in the archaeological record. The HER results support this, with one Neolithic siltstone axe and scrapers recorded (HER entry 3). A worked flint scraper dated to the Neolithic has been recorded on the PAS database within the study site region (SUR-819804). The excavation at the former Elvian School did reveal several pieces of struck flint which are thought to be of Neolithic or Bronze Age in date (HER entry 7), suggesting there was a relatively moderate level of activity during this period within the area. Also recorded at this site was a single Middle Bronze Age ditch, which was cut by a later Iron Age roundhouse gully. Outside the search radius, c.1.7km south-east of the study site, several Late Bronze Age roundhouses and a series of Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age boundary ditches and field systems were recorded at the Reading Business Park (Moore and Jennings 1992). Additionally, Mesolithic flint implements, Neolithic pits and a Bronze Age burial were also excavated.

7.2.3 There appears to have been a relatively high level of Iron Age activity within the area, with the sites of Denton's Pit and the former Elvian School both situated c.650m north-east of the study site providing an abundance of Iron Age finds and features. The former

site was discovered in 1933 and a subsequent excavation revealed at least 9 pits with several sherds of pottery dating to the Iron Age period (HER entry 6). The latter site located just to the east was excavated in 2016, with numerous phases of Iron Age occupation recorded dating from the 5th century BC to the 1st century AD (HER entry 7). The features recorded included 10 roundhouse ring gullies, several of which had multiple re-buildings, along with two enclosures, a trackway, a fence line, pits and postholes. This level of evidence indicates there was a substantial settlement which was in use over a relatively long period. Other Iron Age material comes from a site c.680m west of the study site, where black sand tempered pottery has been found (HER entry 10). The Iron Age centre of the *Atrebates*, later the Roman settlement of *Calleva Atrebatum* (now known as Silchester), was located c.11km south-west of the study site, indicating the Elvian School Iron Age settlement and the study site area may have been situated near a route between Silchester and London, two important centres during the Iron Age.

7.3 Roman

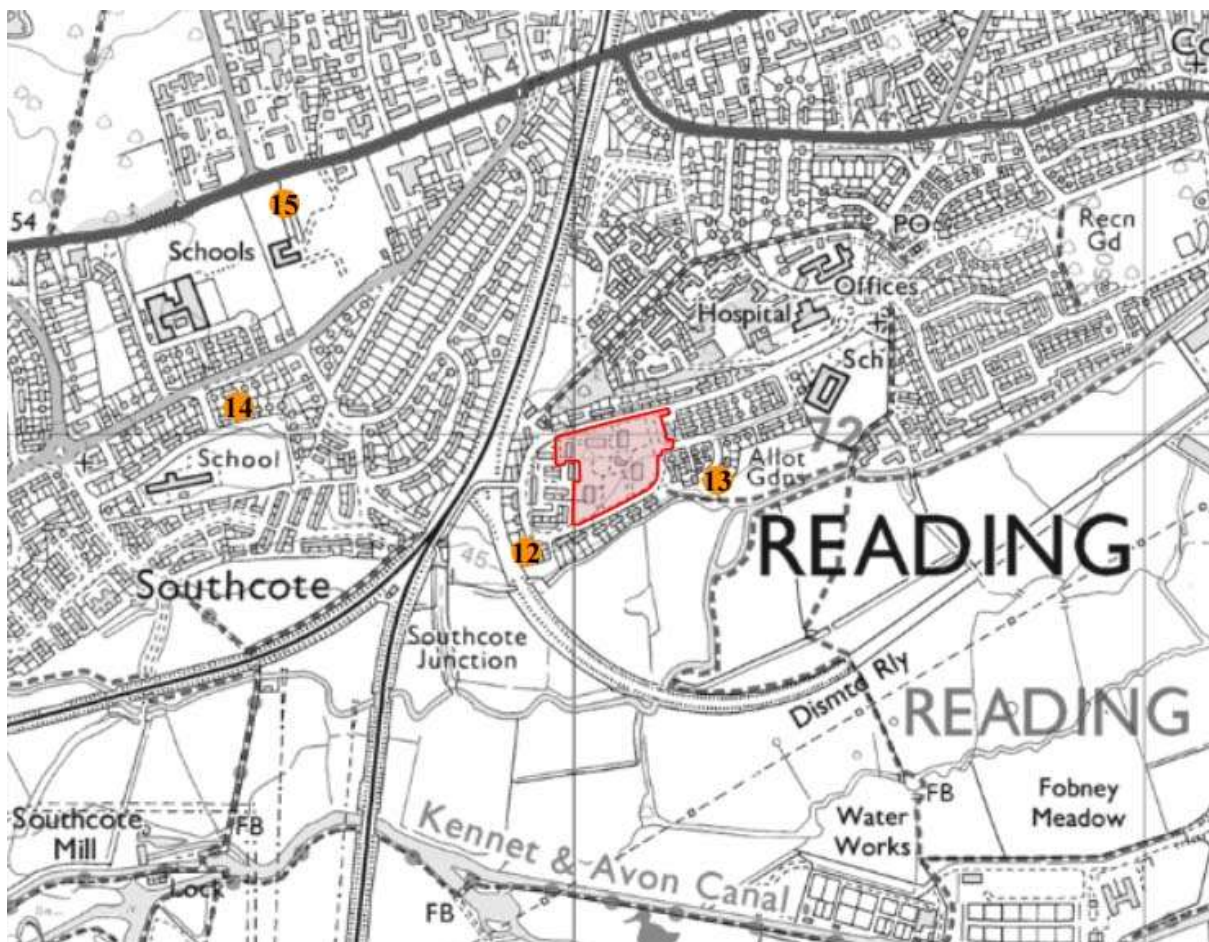


Figure 6: Distribution of Roman HER entries (orange) in relation to the site (red)

No.	Mon. UID	SU Ref.	Description	References
12	01652.00.000 - MRD3659	69902 71797	257 Wensley Close, Coley. A coin, possibly Faustina junior (2 nd century) found.	-
13	02078.00.000 - MRD11303	70240 71930	15 Heronway, Coley Park. A coin of Constantine I (urbs roma) was found.	-
14	01657.00.000 - MRD10425	695 724	Presentation College, Bath Road. A bronze coin of Constantius II was dug up in the grounds of Presentation College.	1969. Reading Museum Records 1/8/69. 1970. Berkshire Archaeological Journal. 65. Page 58
15	MRM15790	69406 72047	61 Silchester Road. In 2005 three Roman gaming dice were found in garden topsoil at 61 Silchester Road by the house owner.	-

7.3.1 The line of the Roman road connecting Silchester and Verulamium is believed to have run on a south-west to north-east alignment, west of the study site, although the exact projection is not known. The Roman town of Silchester was situated c.11km south-west of the study site. It was originally the centre of the Iron Age kingdom of the *Atrebates* tribe from the late 1st century BC and after the Roman conquest it developed into the town of *Calleva Atrebatum* and became an important trading centre. Reading may have developed as a riverside port in the Roman period, facilitating the movement of goods between *Londinium* and *Calleva Atrebatum*. The HER search revealed three findspots of Roman coins (HER entries 12-14) and one site where Roman gaming dice were found (HER entry 15). Other findspots come from the PAS database, with three Roman coins found within the study site area (SUR-3A0453, SUR-0FA99C and SUR-8A48F7). These finds do not indicate a substantial long-term Roman occupation within the area surrounding the study site. Further south-east, the Reading Business Park site a Late Iron Age to Roman enclosure was excavated (Moore and Jennings 1992). A log boat coffin of probably Roman date containing a skeleton was found c.1km south-east of the study site.

7.4 Saxon

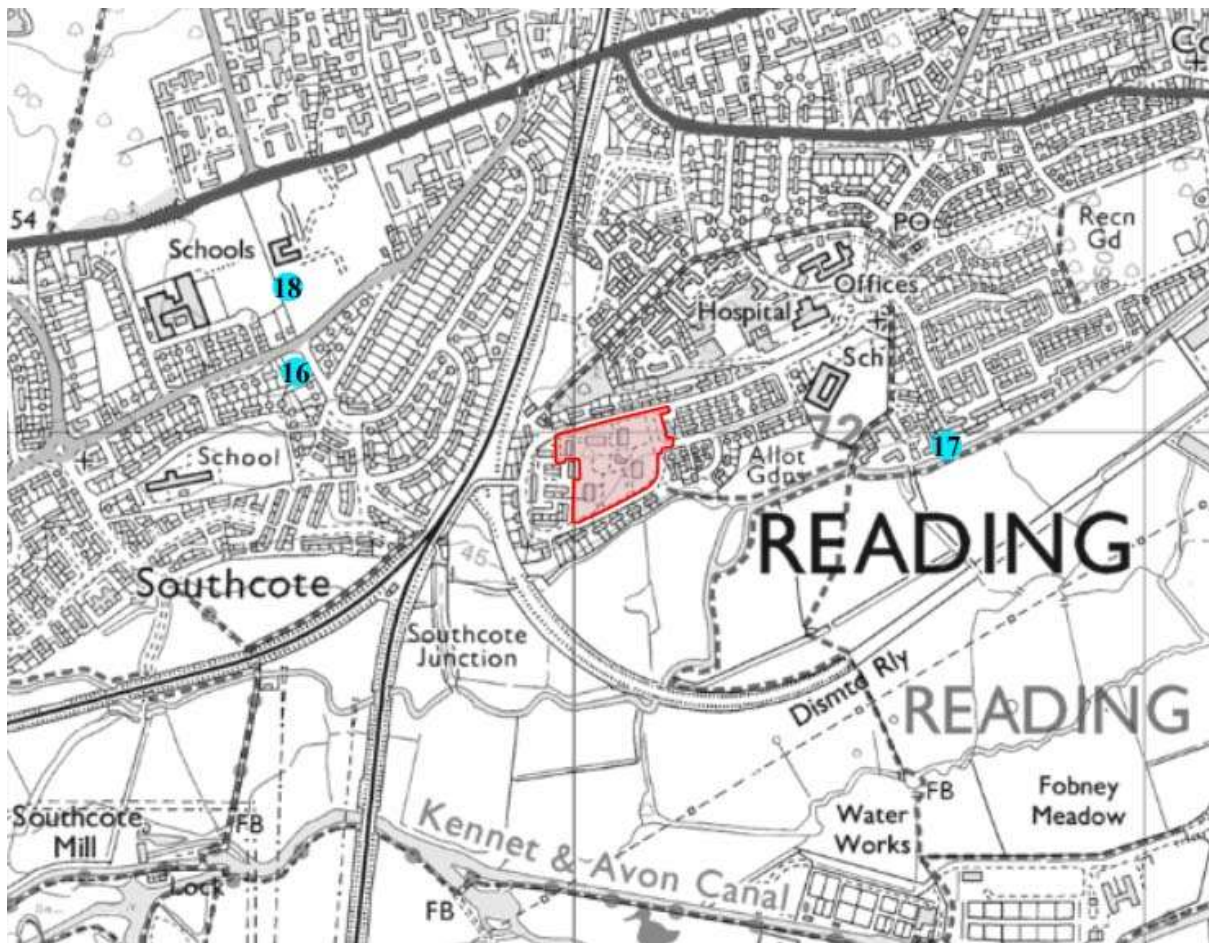


Figure 7: Distribution of Saxon HER entries (blue) in relation to the site (red)

No.	Mon. UID	SU Ref.	Description	References
16	01641.00.000 - MRD3656	69520 72100	77 Southcote Lane. A Saxon burial urn containing ashes and bone fragments was found in Southcote Lane in 1924.	Berkshire Archaeological Journal. 1937. Berkshire Archaeological Journal. 41. Page 38.
17	09033.00.000 - MRD15608 ERD54	70661 71978	Holy Brook - Coley Park Farm. From an excavated trial trench a uniform silt layer was recorded in which was found: wooden fragments of a possible bowl and a worked birch stake. The stake was radiocarbon dated to AD 650-760 (Har-8559) 1320 ± 50 BP. Hazel nuts, were recovered from below the level of the present water table in the lower part of the deposit. Six sherds of coarse pottery of probable middle Saxon date were recovered, together with three	Hawkes J.W and Fasham P.J. 1997. Excavations on Reading Waterfront Sites 1979 -1988 (Wessex Archaeology Monograph Report. Report No.5). Pages 59 – 61.

			struck flakes, animal bone and a gilt pin. The single stake recovered was interpreted as being part of an early revetment or channel demarcation of the Holy Brook along a man-made bank. A single sherd in close association with the stake can be dated to the early or middle Saxon period.	
18	MRM18414	6949 7224	Former Elvian School, Southcote Lane. A pit containing a large pottery sherd of early/middle Saxon date was revealed during an archaeological excavation.	Thames Valley Archaeological Services. 2018. An Early to Middle Iron Age Settlement at the Former Elvian School Reading Berkshire. Occasional Paper 27. Pages 11, 27 and 38.

7.4.1 Following the withdrawal of a Roman presence, Reading continued to develop as a settlement in the Saxon period. The town's name is recorded as *Readingum*, deriving from *Readingas*, an Anglo-Saxon tribe whose name means 'Reada's People' (Nash Ford 2017). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* records that in AD 870 the Vikings set up a base at Reading with the intent on taking the kingdom of Wessex (Kelly 2018). The Battle of Reading followed in AD 871, in which the Danish Viking army was victorious over King Æthelred. The site of the battle is thought to have been c.3km north-east of the study site, as the Viking fortress is recorded to have been located between the River Thames and the River Kennet.

7.4.2 The HER search results indicate there was Saxon activity within the area surrounding the study site. Approximately 550m east of the study site, occupation is evident near the Holy Brook channel, with a wooden stake interpreted as an early revetment of the channel along with domestic evidence including hazel nuts, a possible wooden bowl, pottery, animal bone and a gilt pin (HER entry 17). Further evidence of Saxon occupation comes from a pit with pottery sherds recorded on a site c.615m north-west of the study site (HER entry 18). Just north of this site, a Saxon burial urn with ashes and bone fragments was recorded (HER entry 16). The HER entries indicate small-scale occupation within the study site area, most likely representing the outskirts of the settlements of Southcote to the west and Whitley to the south-east. Therefore, during the Saxon period the study site may have been situated in open ground used for hunting or agriculture by the nearby settlements of recorded in the Domesday Book.

7.5 Medieval

7.5.1 As mentioned above, there were three settlements surrounding the study site listed in the Domesday Survey – Southcote to the west, Reading to the north-east and Whitley to the south-east – all of which were situated within the hundred of Reading and the county of Berkshire (Open Domesday 2019a-c). Southcote and Whitley were relatively small settlements, with Southcote consisting of 5 villagers, 8 smallholders, 1 mill and 1 fishery belonging to the tenant-in-chief William of Braose (Open Domesday 2019a). Whitley was owned by Theodric the goldsmith and comprised 2 villagers, 2 smallholders, 4 slaves, 3 ploughlands, 1 lord's plough team, 1 men's plough teams, 12

acres of meadow and 1 fishery (Open Domesday 2019b). Reading was a larger settlement, with a recorded population of 102 households in 1086, putting it in the largest 20% of settlements recorded in the Domesday Book. King William was the lord and it comprised a vast amount of land, including 40 ploughlands, 150 meadow acres, woodland 100 swine render, 4 mills and 3 fisheries (Open Domesday 2019c).

- 7.5.2 The Abbey was built in Reading by Henry I in 1121-1125, c.2.5km north-east of the study site. Reading comprised three parishes: St Marys, St Giles and St Laurence's, and by the 14th century the estimated population was c.1,300. The study site was situated within St Mary's parish.
- 7.5.3 The study site was partly located within the Coley Park Estate, which is thought to have been in existence since at least the 13th century, with the Vachell family purchasing the land from Thomas Syward in 1309 (Ditchfield and Page 1923). Over the course of the 418 years the Vachell family occupied Coley Park Estate, the estate had a working farm and a stately manor house, known as Vachell House, constructed on the banks of the Holy Brook in c.1555 (Coley Park 1999a). The Vachell family also owned many estates in Berkshire, including Little Coley Farm and Southcote Farm.
- 7.5.4 Despite the presence of the Coley Park Estate and the Southcote Farm Estate, there is a lack of archaeological evidence dating to the medieval period from the HER search. The Coley Park Farm record ranges in date from the medieval to the post-medieval period, however, the evidence comes from 17th to 19th century buildings (HER entry 23: 02128.00.000 - MRD4001). The study site most likely covered an area of open ground within the estate, possibly used for cultivation or pasture.
- 7.5.5 Other archaeological evidence from the surrounding area comes from the PAS database, including two silver coins from modern day Pakistan, which are likely to have been transported to Britain in the post-medieval period (SUR-70EB72). Other finds include two medieval jettons (SUR-D3AF6F and SUR-DB5B03), four silver coins (SUR-00B4E7, SUR-3A6823, SUR-3AB06 and SUR-3A1A75), a possible pilgrim badge (SUR-8DD812) and a strap end (SUR-009CB3).

7.6 Post-medieval

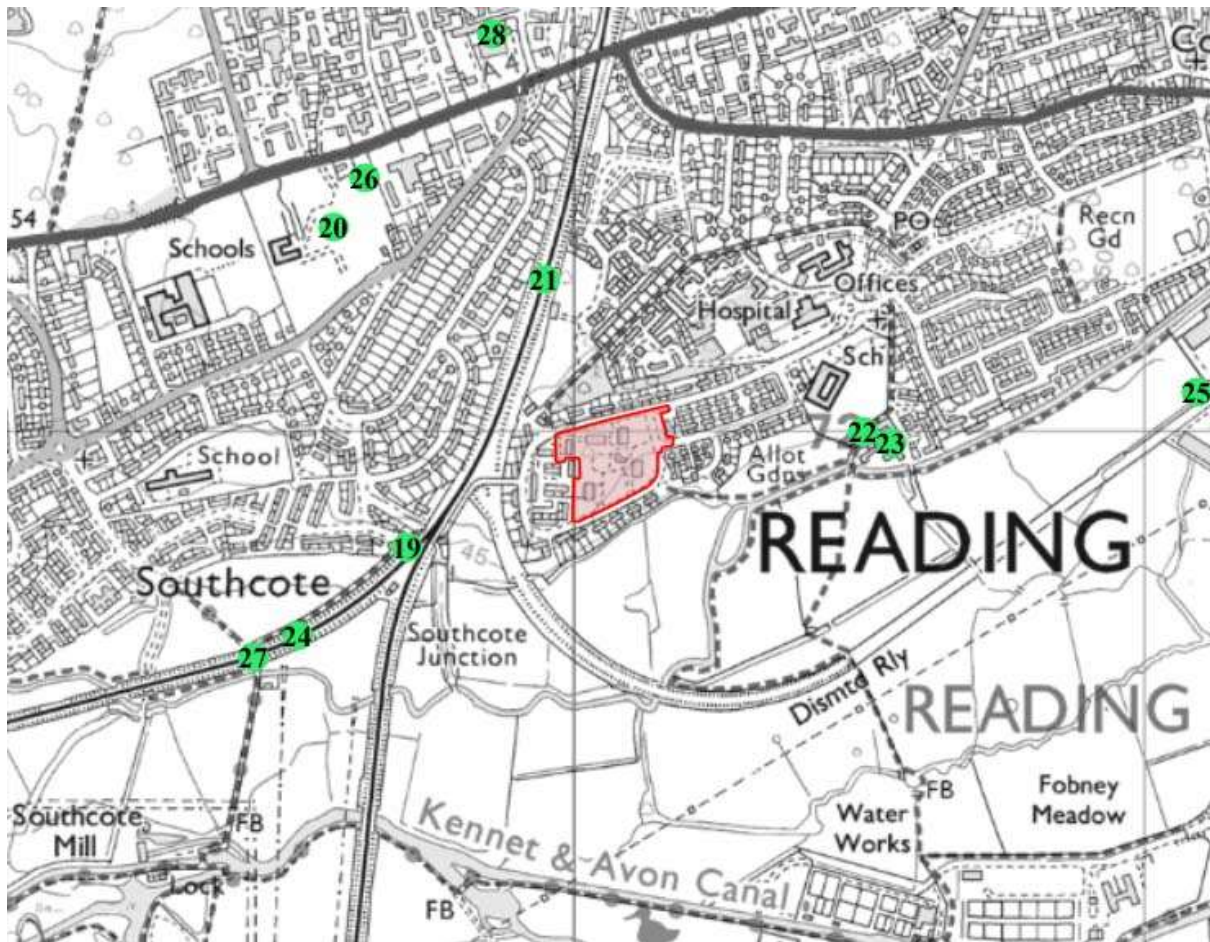


Figure 8: Distribution of post-medieval HER entries (green) in relation to the site (red)

No.	Mon. UID	SU Ref.	Description	References
19	MRM16669	6974 7182	Southcote Farm Lane Underbridge. Steel deck span girder bridge located at the junction of the Berkshire and Hampshire Railway and Reading to Basingstoke Line.	Alan Baxter. 2012. <i>Great Western Main Line Route Structures Gazetteer</i> , BHL3773.
20	MRM16645	6957 7237	Oakland Hall, Bath Road. A three-storey Italianate style house built in 1876. Locally listed.	Thames Valley Archaeological Services. 2011. <i>Elvian School, Bath Road, Reading, Berkshire. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment</i>
21	05055.01.000 - MRD6122	69932 72232	Reading to Mortimer Station. Section of Basingstoke railway line between Reading and Mortimer Station.	Adams, W (ed). 1993. <i>Encyclopaedia of the Great Western Railway</i>

22	05124.00.000 - MRD6261	70500 72000	Southcote Mill. A wheel driven watermill on the Holy Brook listed in 1963-64. Part of a small farm.	Berkshire Archaeological Services. 1963-64. <i>Berkshire Archaeological Journal</i>
23	02128.00.000 - MRD4001	70540 71990	Coley Park Farm. A range of farm buildings from 17 th to 19 th century date, originally associated with Coley Park mansion house. Converted into housing late 1980s/early 1990s.	-
	02128.01.000 - MRD4002 ERD7	70529 71981	Dovecote at Coley Park Farm. A small circular dovecote. Door has a lozenge date stone with '1593 TV'. Grade II Listed.	Oxford Archaeological Unit. 1995. MPP Dovecote Assessment, Coley Park Farm, Reading.
24	05053.13.000 - MRD6050	69560 71666	Southcote Junction to Theale Station. A section of railway between Southcote Junction and Theale.	-
25	05053.37.000 - MRD6103	71111 72061	The Reading Central Goods Line is now dismantled. The line to the Depot was known as the Coley Branch, the line and the depot opened in 1908. The Depot and branch line closed in 1983	Adams, W (ed). 1993. Encyclopaedia of the Great Western Railway. Page 171.
26	MRM16646	6962 7244	Rotherfield Grange, Bath Road. A late Victorian era two and a half storey red brick building, now demolished.	Thames Valley Archaeological Services. 2011. Elvian School, Bath Road, Reading, Berkshire. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment.
27	MRM16670	6943 7160	Mill Lane Underbridge. Red brick and sandstone arch bridge constructed 1845-1847.	Alan Baxter. 2012. Great Western Main Line Route Structures Gazetteer. BHL3812.
28	ERD35	69860 72671	Former Carmelite Monastery, 1 Southcote Road. An archaeological evaluation demonstrated that large parts of the site had been subject to gravel extraction and those areas that had not, contained no archaeological remains. The gravel extraction certainly dated from the 19th/20 th century, and possibly from as early as the 17th century. Finds recovered during the evaluation were of post-medieval date, probably 19th/20th century.	Wessex Archaeology. 1999. Former Carmelite Monastery, 1 Southcote Road, Reading, Berkshire.

- 7.6.1** Reading was an important location during the Civil War as it was situated along the Great West Road, a major route for the transport of military equipment and material from London to Parliament's armies (Marsh 2018). The town then became an important garrison for the royalists after its capture in 1642 as its location near King Charles I's war-time capital Oxford made it ideal. Parliament's army under the command of the Earl of Essex advanced south of Reading in 1643 and made Southcote House his headquarters, a site c.800m south-west of the study site. Several coins found within the study site area have been recorded on the PAS database which date to the late 17th and early 18th centuries (SUR-EE1018, SUR-00CFF1, SUR-DBF205, SUR-DBCCA5, SUR-DBBA52, SUR-DBAE18 and SUR-DB9BA7).
- 7.6.2** Reading saw a great deal of development throughout the post-medieval period, as it became a major centre of wool and cloth production and trade (Ralph Lewis 2001). Several canals were constructed surrounding Reading in the 1810s, which made it easier to transport goods, including coal, timber and corn. The Great Western Railway opened Reading station in 1840 and the railway line was extended to Basingstoke in 1848, running west of the study site. Several of the HER entries relate to the railway, with two sections of railway lines, a disused railway line and two bridges recorded (HER entries 19, 21, 24, 25 and 27). The increase in rail as a mode of transport saw the county's canals severely impacted, with many going out of use. Despite the increasing urbanisation of Reading and its surrounding towns, many of the towns remained small, and the county retained much of its traditional, agricultural character. This is supported by seven horseshoes being recorded on the PAS database in the surrounding area (SUR-C85AE6, SUR-C85352, SUR-C84296, SUR-C83662, SUR-C82E42, SUR-C81E18 and SUR-C81560). In the 18th century a major iron works was constructed in Reading and the town also became known for its brewing trade. In the areas surrounding the town there was a shift towards dairy farming in the 19th century, with Coley Park Farm being one such dairy farm.
- 7.6.3** Several of the finds recorded on the PAS database relate to personal adornment, with six buckles recorded (SUR-9458A1, SUR-C896F5, SUR-C88E77, SUR-C87913, SUR-C86E52 and SURC86540), two buttons (SUR-7BC35E and SUR-DC0661) and a dress fastener (SUR-5EA881). Other finds include two pairs of bells (SUR-25D641 and SUR-AB1084), two tokens (SUR-5D947B and SUR-5D7F5F), two seals (SUR-615A1 and SUR-5E66E4) and a weight (SUR-00C611).
- 7.6.4** A range of farm buildings were constructed at Coley Park Farm from the 17th to the 19th century, with an earlier building, the extant dovecote, built in the 16th century (HER entry 23). Coley Park Estate was owned by the Vachell family until it was sold to a Colonel Richard Thompson in 1727 (Coley Park 1999a). The Estate passed through several landholders in the 18th and 19th centuries. Vachell House, originally constructed c.1555, was modified several times over the years, with a repair occurring after the Civil War in 1651 as it had been left in a bad state (Coley Park 1999b). After years of winter flooding due to its location close to the banks of the Holy Brook rivulet, Vachell House was abandoned. A new building, known as Coley House or Mansion House, was constructed in c.1802, to the north on higher ground to avoid seasonal flooding. Materials, such as stone, timbers and fittings, were salvaged from the old ruined Vachell House and reused in Coley House. The study site was situated towards the western end of the Estate, in an area of woods and the North Lodge cottage with a pathway leading

to Southcote Farm across the railway line. In the meadows just south of Coley Park Farm was a Volunteer Rifle Range from c.1860-1908 (Coley Park 1999c).

7.7 *Modern*

- 7.7.1** During the First World War two fields in Coley Park were used as an airfield for the Royal Flying Corps' No. 1 School of Military Aeronautics and No. 1 School of Technical Training, which were based nearby (Coley Park 1999d). The airfield fell into disuse by the end of the war due to river fogs disrupting the flying. After the Second World War the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) occupied Coley House and the gardens in the northern part of the estate (Coley Park 1999b). By the mid-1980s MAFF had moved from Coley House and it was subsequently bricked up and left derelict. In the mid-1990s Coley House underwent major restoration works by the Berkshire Independent Hospital run by Ramsay Health Care UK, and is currently an outpatients building.
- 7.7.2** Coley Park Estate was owned by the Bucknell family from 1937 to 1955, which included 520 acres, a mansion, gardens, park, three dairy farms (Coley Park Farm, Southcote Farm and Southcote Manor Farm), Kennet Moor and Second Gosling Moor (Coley Park 1999e). The area of land consisting of the now Wensley and Lesford Roads was purchased by the Reading Corporation in 1956 for future council housing. Subsequently, the existing houses along Wensley and Lesford Roads were built and in 1959 construction of the three existing 15-storey flats began. North Lodge was demolished in the 1990s and houses were constructed on the site of the cottage and its associated gardens (Coley Park 1999e).

7.8 Undated

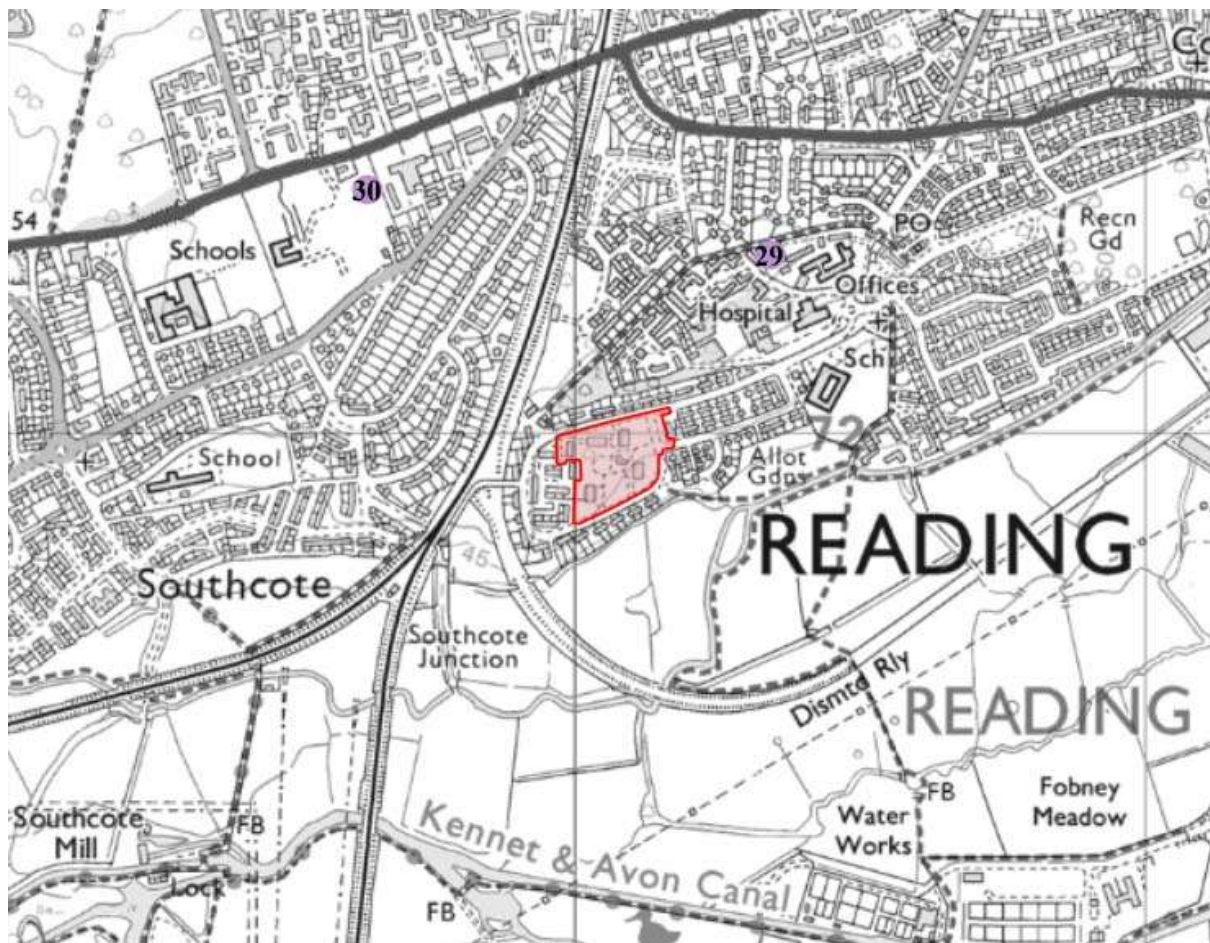


Figure 9: Distribution of undated HER entries (purple) in relation to the site (red)

No.	Mon. UID	SU Ref.	Description	References
29	MRM18189 ERM1878	70364 72323	Coley Park, Coley Avenue. Two undated ditches were revealed at Coley Park during an archaeological evaluation. Both contained no finds but are likely to represent the same feature.	Thames Valley Archaeological Services. 2016. Coley Park, Coley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire - Archaeological Evaluation.
30	ERM1939	6959 7237	Wren School, Bath Road. Trenches (1 and 7) each contained a single undated pit, one of which is interpreted as a possible quarry feature. No significant archaeological remains were encountered during the archaeological evaluation.	AOC Archaeology. 2016. An Archaeological Evaluation Report - Wren School Bath Road Reading, Berkshire

- 7.8.1** Two sites within the study site area included ditches and pits which could not be dated (HER entries 29 and 30). The pits may represent post-medieval quarrying, as the site is located near to the site of recorded gravel extraction dating to the post-medieval period (HER entry 28).

7.9 *Listed Buildings*

- 7.9.1** There are 14 Listed buildings within the HER search radius, which range from the 16th to 19th centuries and include houses, barns, a dovecote, a coach-house, kitchen garden walls, bridges and a boundary stone. Several of the listed buildings were located within the former Coley Park Estate, however, none are located within or immediately adjacent to the study site.

8 CARTOGRAPHIC & DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR POST-MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT

The post-medieval development of the study site can best be illustrated with reference to cartographic and documentary sources. The following section discusses several of these in chronological order.

8.1 Kip and Knyff '*Coley Near Reading in ye County of Berks, ye Seat of Tanfield Vachell Esqr., c.1700-1705*

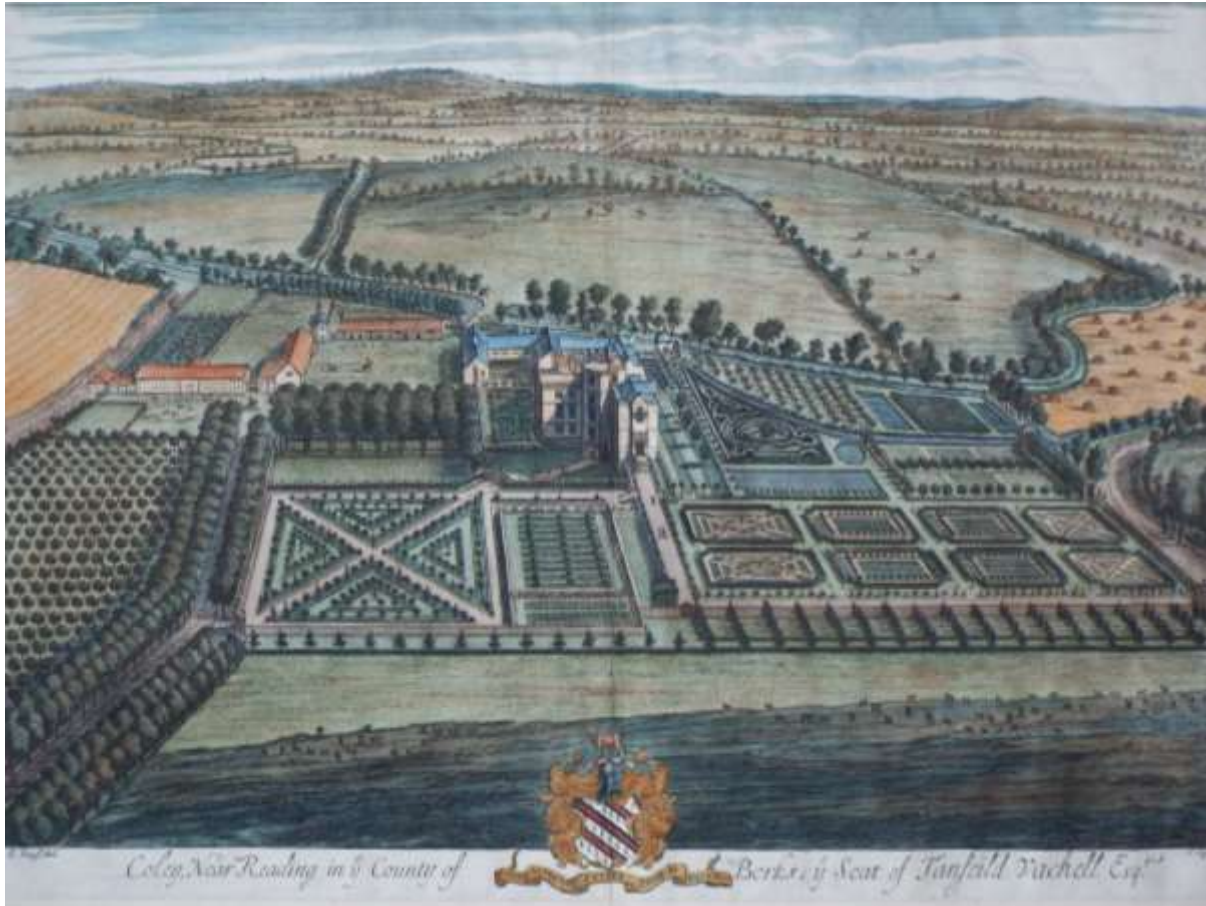


Figure 10: Extract from Kip and Knyff's illustration of the Coley Park Estate, dated c.1700-1705. Looking south, with the site area not illustrated and located to the west (right-hand side)

This illustration was drawn by Leonard Knyff and engraved by Jan Kip in the early 18th century. It depicts the building known as Vachell House and the Coley Park grounds including Dutch-style formal gardens. The Holy Brook is depicted running adjacent to the house, indicating the view point is looking south. The study site is out of view to the right-hand side of the above image.

8.2 Rocque's 'A Topographical map of the County of Berks' Sheet 3, 1761



Figure 11: Extract from Rocque's topographical map of Berkshire, sheet 3 (1761), with the approximate location of the site marked in red

John Rocque's map of Berkshire is the largest of his county surveys. It shows the study site within the Hundred of Reading and the parish of St. Mary. The relatively large settlement of Reading is visible north-east of the site, and two smaller settlements are shown to the east and west of the study site – *Coley* and *Southcott*. The study site appears to be within or adjacent to the land of the Coley Park Estate. There appears to have been an area of high ground immediately north of the study site.

8.3 Davis' Detailed coloured plan of Coley Estate, Whitley Farm and the Abbey Mills, Reading, 1792

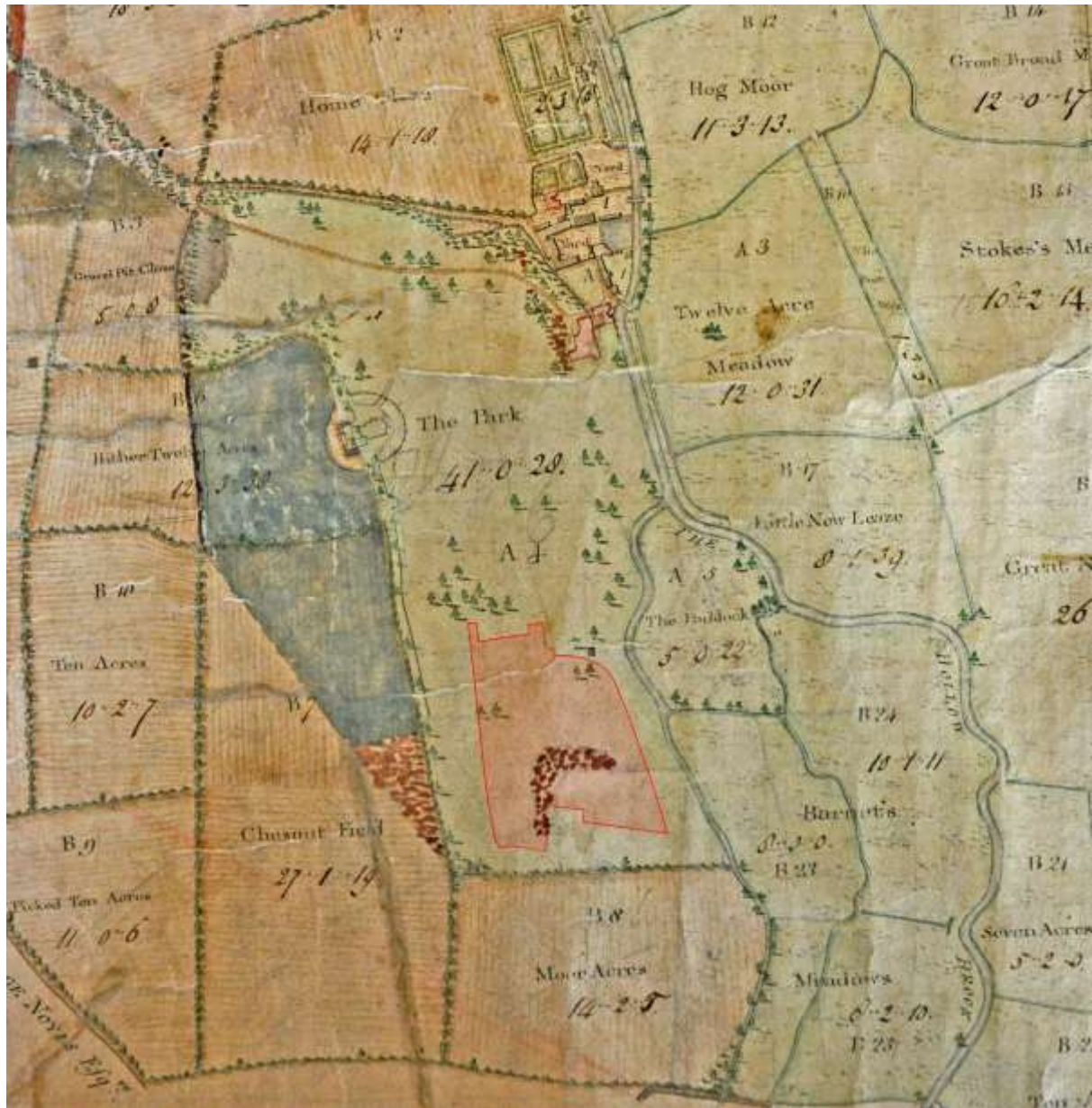


Figure 12: Extract from Davis' plan of Coley Park Estate (1792), with the site outline marked in red. East at the top of the image

Richard Davis' plan of the area surrounding the study site shows the original location of Vachell House, before it was rebuilt c.1802 further north. Kip and Knyff's illustration is similar to this plan in terms of the layout of the meadows and moors south of Holy Brook. The formal gardens depicted at the beginning of the 18th century, north of the house are no longer illustrated on the plan, with some possible kitchen gardens visible to the east of the house. The study site sat within an area labelled as 'The Park', an area of open gardens, with woodland, possibly used for pasture as indicated by the colour.

8.4 St Mary's Tithe Apportionment Map, 1838

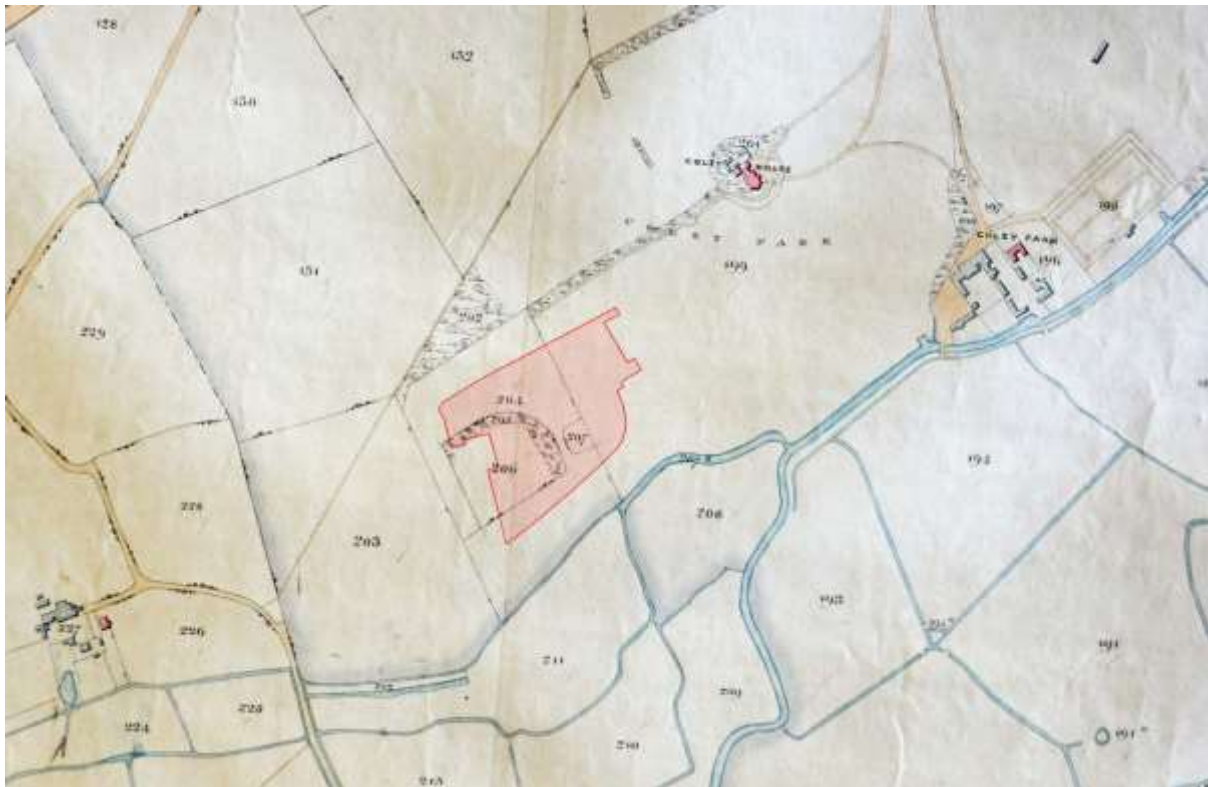


Figure 13: Extract from the St. Mary's Tithe Apportionment Map (1838), with the site outline in red

The Reading Tithe Maps, first produced between 1836 and 1870 provide a comprehensive list of landowners and uses for each plot of land.

The study site sites across multiple land boundaries including plot 206 at the south-western part of the site and 205 at the western part of the site. The site occupied plot 204 and 199, with a small plot numbered 207.

No.	Owner	Occupier	Name and Description of land	State
199	John Bligh Monck	himself	Coley Park	Pasture
202	John Bligh Monck	himself	Plantation	Wood
203	John Bligh Monck	Daniel Wilshin Junior	Moor Acres	Arable
204	John Bligh Monck	himself	Part of Coley Park	Pasture
205	John Bligh Monck	himself	Plantation	Wood
206	John Bligh Monck	himself	Garden ground	-
207	John Bligh Monck	himself	Plantation	Wood

Coley Park Estate was held by the Monck Family from 1810 to 1937, with John Bligh Monck inheriting the estate from his father, John Berkeley Monck, in 1835. Plot 205 is wooded, which appears to form a boundary of plot 206, which is described as a garden ground area. Plot 205 may have been a woodland grove, which was a popular design in the 17th century and often used as a place to walk in ‘wilderness’ (Clark 2015). Plot 206 may have been a woodland garden, which was a garden created within a woodland where imported species were grown (Parks and Gardens 2019). The main house on the Coley Park Estate was rebuilt by 1838, located north-east of the study site.

8.5 Ordnance Survey six-inch ‘Berkshire XXXVII’, Surveyed 1872-77, Published 1883

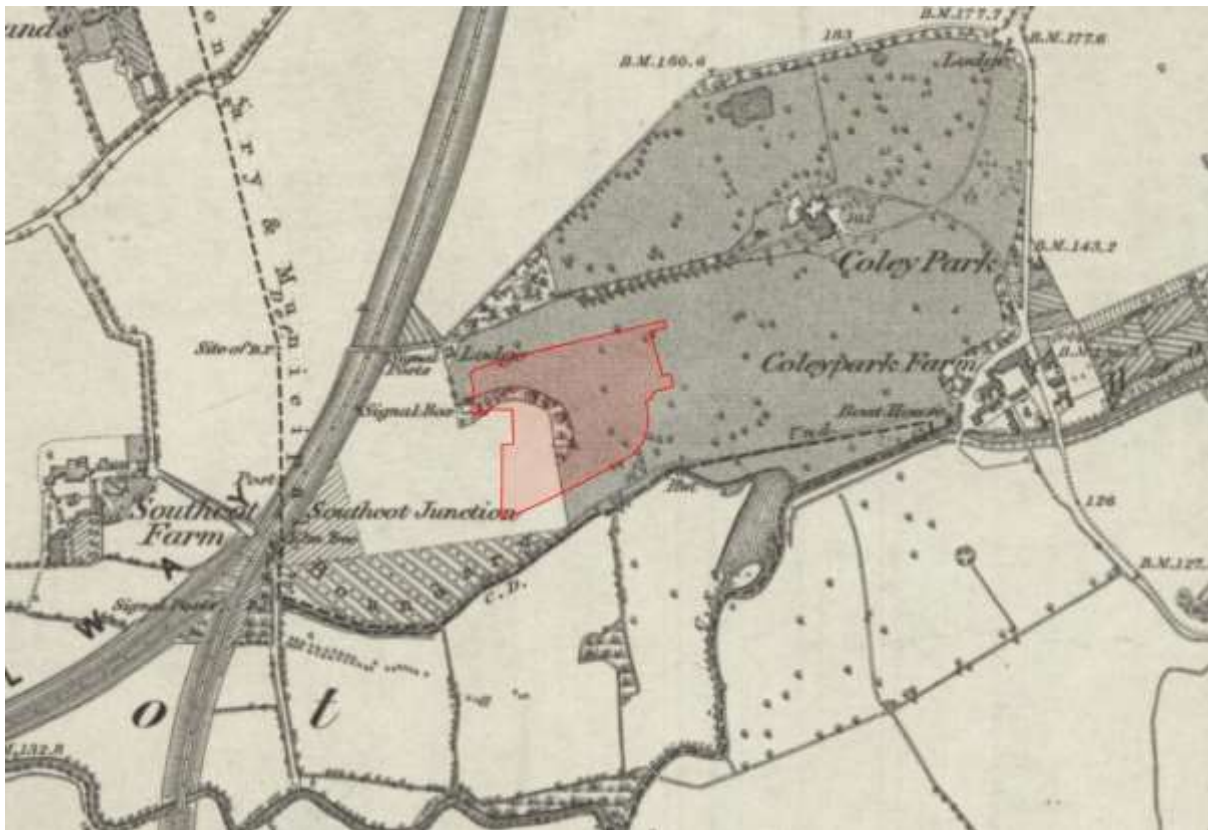


Figure 14: Extract from the OS 6-inch Berkshire XXXVII map (1883) with the study site outlined in red

This detailed Ordnance Survey map published in 1883 shows that the majority of the study site was situated on the Coley Park Estate. The crescent-shaped area of mixed woodland was still present within the site outline. The north and east part of the study site was still part of Coley Park and appears to have still been used for pasture for Coley Park Farm, which was run as a dairy farm during this time. The boundaries in the south-west part of the site appear to have changed, with the garden ground marked on the tithe map not visible in this Ordnance Survey map. Instead the boundary of Coley Park follows the outline of the crescent-shaped woodland, with the plot labelled as Moor Acres on the tithe map possibly extended to the east.

To the south is Holy Brook, which has areas of marshland surrounding it. There appears to have been a formal garden to the south of the site. The Great Western Railway line

ran west of the site, with the Basingstoke Branch opening in 1848, which ran from Reading to Basingstoke through Southcote Junction. There is a lodge adjacent to the study site, known as North Lodge, which had a path crossing the railway line, providing access to Southcote Farm.

8.6 Ordnance Survey 25-inch 'Berkshire XXXVII.6 and XXXVII.7', Revised 1910, Published 1911-12

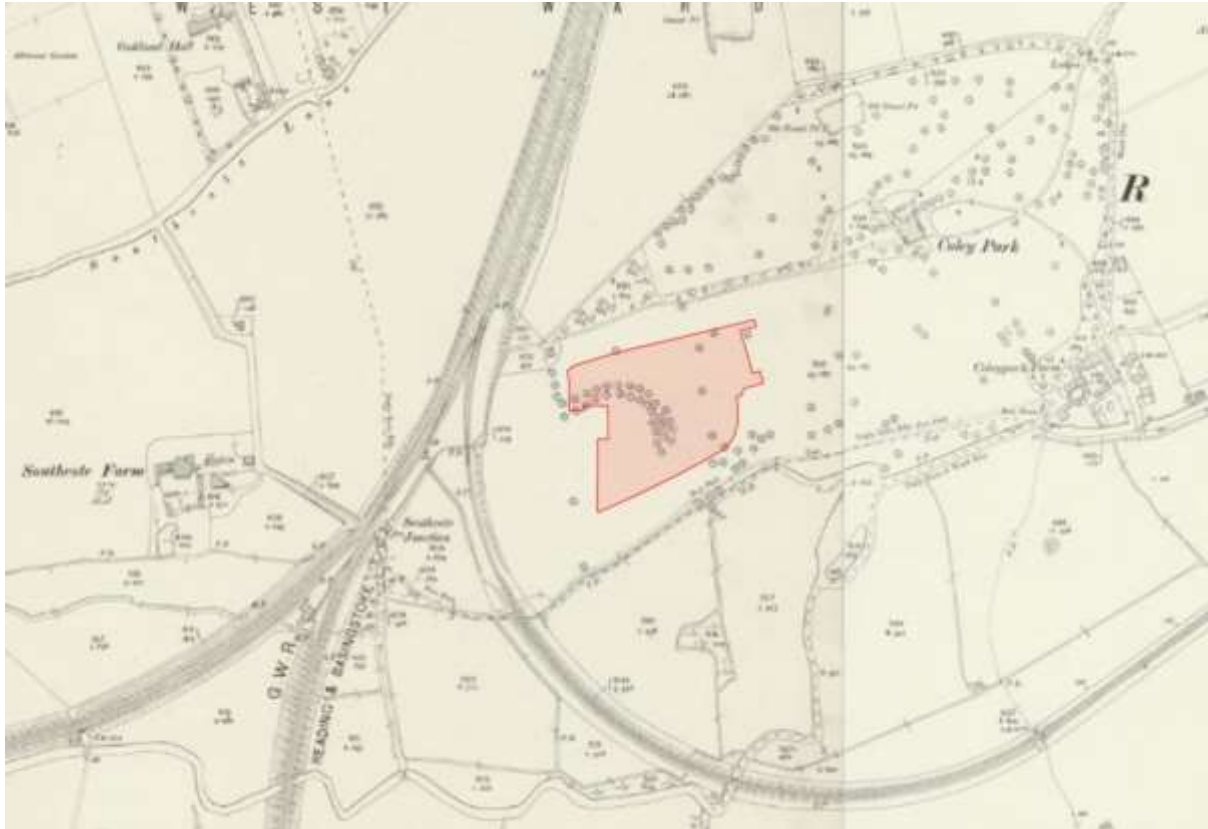


Figure 15: Extract from the OS 25-inch Berkshire XXXVII.6 and XXXVII.7 maps (1911-12), with the site marked in red

The Coley Branch of the Great Western Railway opened in 1908, which diverged eastwards from the Berkshire and Hampshire line at Southcote Junction. It entered the Reading Central Goods railway depot.

The land boundary which ran along the outline of the crescent-shaped woodland area and extended south, dividing Coley Park and Moor Acres, was either omitted from this map or was removed by 1910.

8.7 Sale Catalogue for Coley Park Estate, Reading, 1937

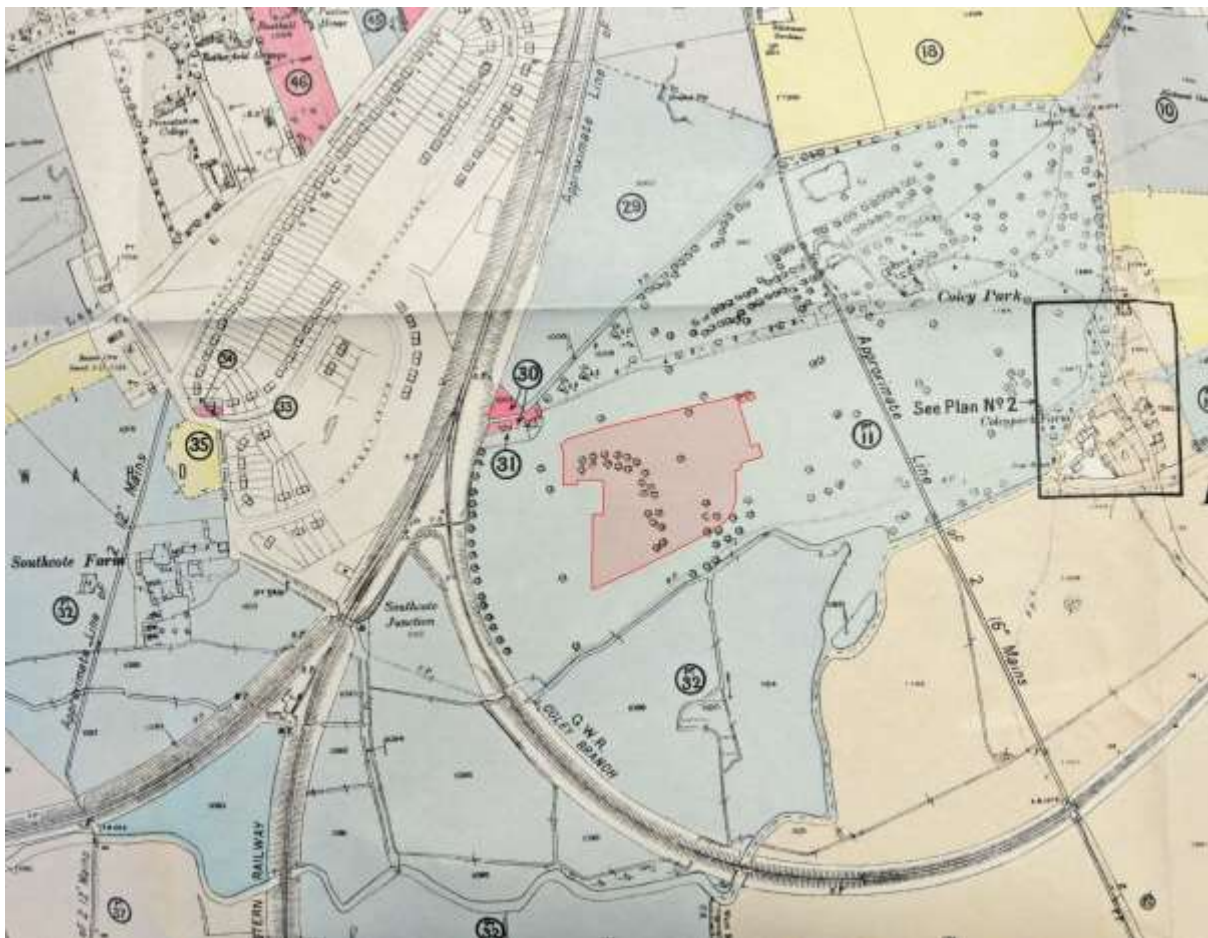


Figure 16: Extract from the Sale Catalogue of the Coley Park Estate (1937), with the site outline in red

This plan was attached to the sale catalogue for the Coley Park Estate, which consisted of c.520 acres with a mansion, gardens, park, three dairy farms (Coley Park Farm, Southcote Farm and Southcote Manor Farm), arable land for growing market gardening crops and other residences.

This plan was based on the OS 1931 and 1932 maps. The wider area stayed largely the same with the addition of a residential housing estate built west of the study site, across the train tracks. Coley Park was used during the First World War as an air field for training, however, no evidence of this is visible on the map published in 1932.

The study site sits within Plot 11, which is described as containing ‘*A most attractive residence situated in the middle of a lovely well-timbered park known as Coley Park*’ which covers c.66 acres of land. The plot also comprised gardens including a fish pond to the west, a long yew bordered grass walk to the rear, as well as shrubbery, wild gardens and trees. The study site probably formed part of the wild gardens and trees.

8.8 Aerial Photograph, 1964



Figure 17: Aerial photograph taken in 1964, with the site outline in red

8.9 Ordnance Survey National Grid maps, SU 6971 and SU7071, published 1967



Figure 18: Extract from the OS National Grid maps SU6971 and SU7071 (1967), with the site outline in red

By the 1960s the layout of the immediate study site area resembled what it looks like a present. Wensley and Lesford Roads were created and houses were built around the outside of the loop of Wensley Road. The three blocks of flats were constructed on the site 1959-60. The Southcote area to the west also saw development, with several housing estate constructed by the 1960s. To the south the land between the Holy Brook and the River Kennet and further south was undeveloped.

8.10 Ordnance Survey National Grid Maps, SU 67 SE and SU 77 SW, published 1973



Figure 19: Extract from the OS National Grid Maps SU 67 SE and SU 77 SW (1973), with the site outline in red

8.11 Aerial Photograph, 1976



Figure 20: Aerial photograph taken in 1976, with the site outline in red

8.12 Aerial Photograph, 1996



Figure 21: Aerial photograph taken in 1996, with the site outline in red

The houses immediately west of the study site were constructed by 1973. Not much changed within or surrounding the study site over the course of the later 20th century. The Coley Branch of the railway line which ran past the study site closed in 1983, after which it was used as a public walking path, which is visible in the 1996 aerial photograph.

9 THE PRESENT SITE

- 9.1 A visit was made to the site on the 11th December 2019, and a photographic record was made of the site as is. What follows is the record made, and should be read in conjunction with Figure 22, showing the direction of the photographs.

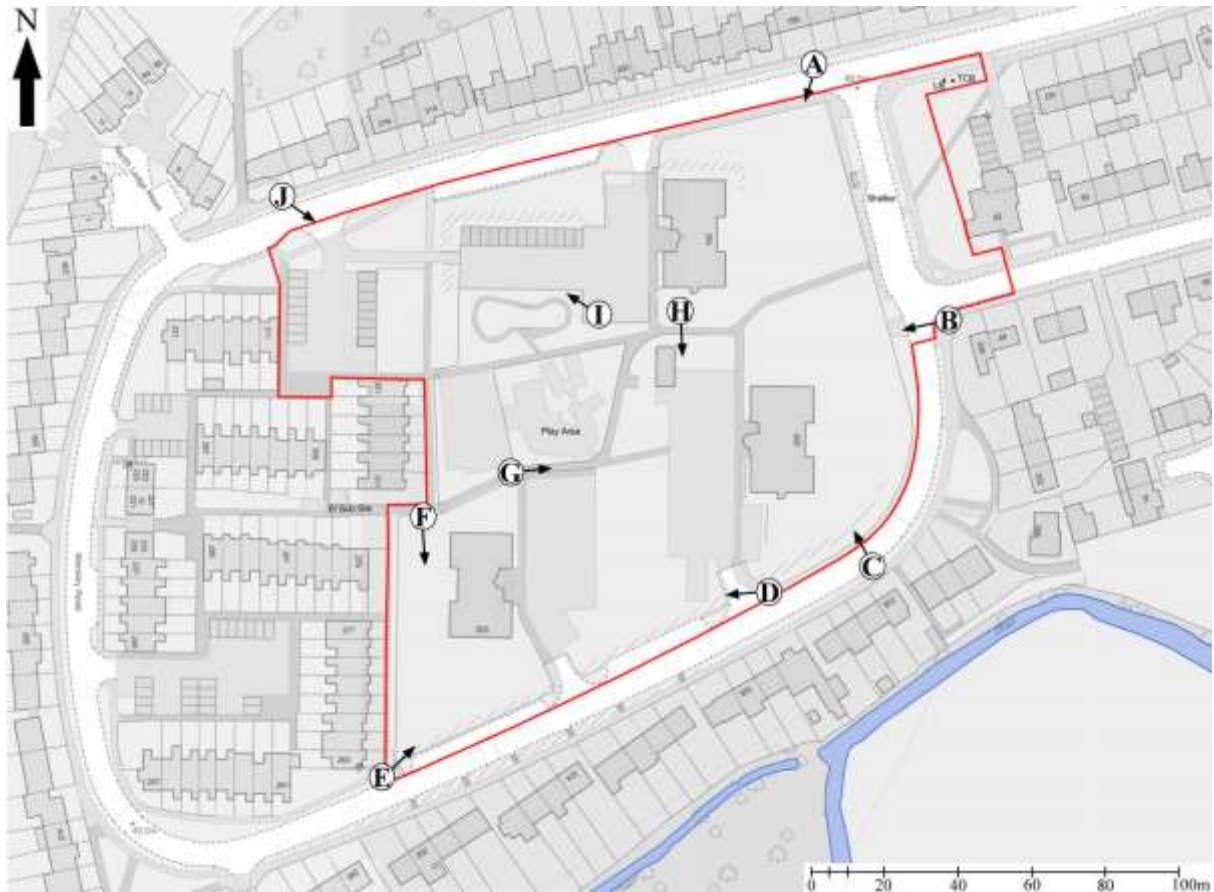


Figure 22: Location and direction of the site visit photographs A-J



Figure 23: Shot A) the north-east corner of the site. Facing SW

- 9.2** The north-east part of the site comprises an open grass area bounded by trees and a fence, with the 15-storey block of flats, Wensley Court, located in the north-east corner and Irving Court in the south-east corner.



Figure 24: Shot B) the eastern part of the site. Facing W

- 9.3** The site boundary covers the junction of Wensley Road and Lesford Road. There is access to the site from the eastern part of the Wensley Road loop, opposite the junction with Lesford Road. This part of Wensley Road slopes downwards towards the south.



Figure 25: Shot C) the south-east part of the site. Facing NW

- 9.4** The south-east boundary is bordered by a line of trees, a fence and a grass verge. The site slopes down towards the south-east corner.



Figure 26: Shot D) the entrance to the car park in the south-eastern part of the site. Facing W

- 9.5 There are two points of access into the site from the south part of the Wensley Road loop, each entering a parking court. Riversley Court is situated in the south-west part of the site.



Figure 27: Shot E) the south-west part of the site. Facing NE

- 9.6** There are two parking bays on the southern part of the Wensley Road loop. There is also a footpath accessed from the south side of the site, which runs northwards and branches out to the centre of the site and the northern and western parts of the Wensley Road loop.



Figure 28: Shot F) the south-west corner of the site. Facing S

- 9.7** The south-west corner of the site is open grass adjacent to Riversley Court. This part of the site is relatively flat.



Figure 29: Shot G) the central part of the site. Facing E

- 9.8** The central part of the site consists of a play area, paths and parking courts. The central part of the site is relatively level.



Figure 30: Shot H) the central part of the site. Facing S

- 9.9** There is an electricity substation in the centre of the site next to the parking court of Irving Court. North of the parking court, the ground level slopes upwards slightly.



Figure 31: Shot I) the north-west part of the site. Facing NW

- 9.10** The north-west part of the site contains a recreational cycle track, which is of varying levels. There are several garages in the north and north-west part of the site. The site slopes slightly upwards towards the north, with the houses visible on the north side of Wensley Road at a high level in shot I.



Figure 32: Shot J) the north-west corner of the site. Facing SE

9.11 The north-west part of the site has access to the parking courts and garages.

10 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 10.1** The proposed development will consist of two phases. The first phase will comprise the construction of new homes, re-configuration of car parks and mews, improved central amenity space and the preservation and enhancement of landscape features (figs. 33 and 34). The second phase will include improvements to the existing three tower blocks, which forms a separate planning application to the phase one works.
- 10.2** Phase one proposes to remove the existing large parking courts to the north of the site, including the garages. The central green space will be retained and expanded to the west and south, creating a central public square. The NNW-SSE part of Wensley Road connecting to Lesford Road will be removed and Lesford Road will be extended westwards. Wensley Road will be extended southwards, cutting through the centre of the site in an L-shape and will connect to Lesford Road. Further west along the northern side of the Wensley Road loop, two more roads will be created, which will be dead-end and will provide access to the new homes. On the south side of the Wensley Road loop a new road extending north will be constructed on the western edge of the site. The existing car parks accessed via the south side of the Wensley Road loop will be retained but will be reduced in length.
- 10.3** On the northern side of the Wensley Road loop, the new homes will front the south side of the road. New residential buildings will also front the north side of the new extension of Lesford Road as well as the central green area. Block A will consist of five, three-bedroom, three-storey houses and two, four-bedroom, three-storey houses. Block B will consist of seven, three-bedroom, houses fronting Wensley Road which will be three-storeys high. Block B will also include two, four-storey blocks of flats which will contain two wheelchair accessible studios and six, one-bedroom flats. Block B will also consist of three other block of flats, two of which will be four-storey and one will be three-storey. These blocks will contain ten, two bedroom flats, two of which will be wheelchair accessible. Block C will include 14, three-bedroom, three-storey houses fronting Wensley Road and the new extension of Lesford Road. All houses and flats in the proposed development will be un-basemented.

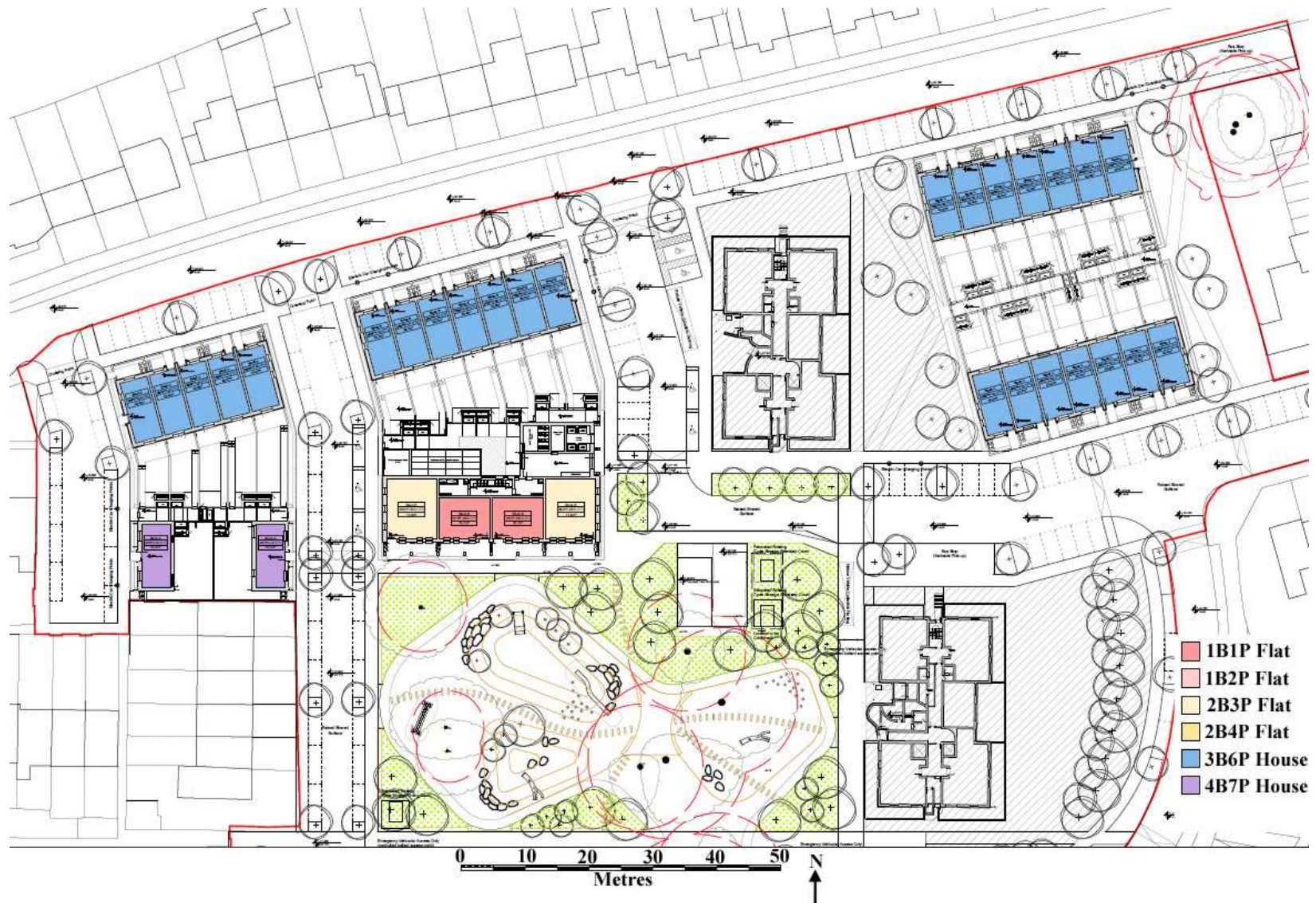


Figure 33: Plan of the northern half of the proposed development. Adapted from drawing No. HTA-A_DR_0109, provided by HTA Design.



Figure 34: Plan of the southern half of the proposed development. Adapted from drawing No. HTA-A_DR_0110, provided by HTA Design.

11 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

11.1 Prehistoric

During the prehistoric period the study site area was likely to have been covered by forest and was located close to the River Kennet and the Holy Brook channel, as well as the River Thames to the north. These factors would have made it an ideal location to settle due to the abundance of resources. The prehistoric evidence from the surrounding area mainly consists of findspots, including several Palaeolithic to Neolithic worked flints. In the later prehistoric period there is evidence of substantial Iron Age occupation from a site c.650m north-west from the study site, which includes 10 roundhouse ring gullies, two enclosures, a trackway, fence lines, pits and postholes. The study site area may have been situated along a route between Silchester and London, which were two important centres during the Iron Age.

It is therefore considered that the potential for encountering prehistoric remains during the proposed development is medium.

11.2 Roman

The study site is east of the projected road connecting the Roman town of *Calleva Atrebatum* (Silchester) to *Londinium* (London). Roman evidence from the surrounding area is limited to findspots and does not appear to represent widespread occupation of the area.

Based on the limited activity in the vicinity of the study site, the likelihood of encountering Roman finds and features is thought to be low. If Roman archaeology is encountered, it is likely to be isolated finds, such as coins.

11.3 Saxon

The study site was situated between three settlements which are likely to have existed in the Saxon period as they are noted in the Domesday Survey in 1086 – Southcote to the west, Reading to the north-east and Whitley to the south-east. Reading was the largest and derives its name from *Readingas*, an Anglo-Saxon tribe whose name means ‘Reada’s People’. The Danish Viking army set up a camp in Reading between the River Thames and Kennet and a battle ensued nearby. The study site was likely to have been located on uninhabited land between the nearby settlements, possibly covered by forest or cleared and used for agriculture.

Therefore the potential for encountering Saxon finds and features of archaeological interest is considered low.

11.4 Medieval

The settlements of Reading, Southcote and Whitley were noted in the Domesday Survey of 1086, with Reading in the largest 20% of settlements recorded in the survey. The Abbey was built in Reading in 1121-1125 by Henry I and by the 14th century Reading’s estimate population was c.1,300. During the period, the study site was situated within the Coley Park Estate, which was in existence since at least the 13th

century, with the Vachell family purchasing the land in 1309. The land was a working farm and had a stately manor house known as Vachell House built on the banks of the Holy Brook in c.1555. Despite the presence of the Coley Park Estate and the Southcote Farm Estate, there is a lack of archaeological evidence dating to the medieval period from the HER search. The study site was partly located on the west side of the Coley Park Estate, which may have been a wooded area during the period, possibly used for pasture or as a decorative feature of the gardens.

It is therefore considered that the potential for encountering medieval remains is low to medium, as although the site was partly situated within the Coley Park Estate, the area is not thought to have been developed. If medieval remains are encountered they are likely to comprise boundary features, buried cultivation soils, residual finds and the remains of an ancient woodland or medieval wood plantation.

11.5 Post-medieval

Reading was an important location during the Civil War due to its proximity to the Great West Road, London and the war-time Royal capital of Oxford. The town was held by both Parliamentary and Royalist armies, the former had headquarters at Southcote House, c.800m south-west of the study site. Reading and its surrounding areas developed over the course of the post-medieval period, initially becoming a major centre for wool and cloth production and trade which towards the end of the 19th century shifted to dairy farming. Several canals and railway lines were built during the 19th century, including the Reading to Basingstoke line which ran west of the study site.

Coley Park Estate was owned by the Vachell family until 1727 and it subsequently passed through several landholders in the 18th and 19th centuries. Vachell House was abandoned and rebuilt in c.1802 on higher ground due to flooding from the Holy Brook. A range of farm buildings were constructed at Coley Park Farm from the 17th to the 19th century, with an earlier building, the extant dovecote, built in the 16th century.

The study site area is shown on the 1838 Tithe maps as being owned and occupied by John Bligh Monck and consisting of wood plantations, garden grounds and an area of pasture which was part of Coley Park. The crescent shape of the wooded plot seen on 18th and 19th century maps may have been an ornamental feature of the park.

Therefore the potential for encountering post-medieval finds and features of archaeological interest is medium. Similar to the medieval period, if post-medieval remains are encountered they are likely to relate to the woodland area, the boundary of the estate and buried cultivation soils. Residual post-medieval finds may also be recovered.

11.6 Modern

During the First World War, two fields of the Coley Park Estate were used as an airfield for the Royal Flying Corps' No. 1 School of Military Aeronautics and No. 1 School of Technical Training, which were based nearby. After the Second World War the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food occupied Coley House and the gardens in the northern part of the estate. By the mid-1980s MAFF had moved from Coley House

and it was subsequently bricked up and left derelict. The Coley Park Estate was divided into several parts over the later 20th century, and the area of land consisting of the current Wensley and Lesford Roads was purchased by the Reading Corporation in 1956 for future council housing. New houses along Wensley and Lesford Roads were built and in 1959 construction of the three existing 15-storey flats began. The study site has remained largely unchanged since the 1960s.

Due to the development of the site in the last half of a century, the likelihood of encountering finds and features will be high.

12 CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1** It has been demonstrated that the site lies within a historically and archaeologically significant landscape, with evidence of activity being recovered dating from the prehistoric period to the present day.
- 12.2** The study site is considered to hold medium potential for archaeological remains from the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval periods. This is based on the relatively high amount of prehistoric evidence found within the area surrounding the study site, with a substantial Iron Age settlement recorded c.650m north-west of the site. From the Iron Age to the Roman period the study site was located near a route between the towns of Silchester and London, two important settlements during this time.
- 12.3** There is a lower potential for Roman and Saxon archaeological finds and features due to the focus towards Reading, north-east of the site and Silchester in the Roman period, south-west of the site. In addition to Reading, the Domesday Survey also lists Southcote and Whitley as two settlements near the study site, which were likely to have been in existence during the Saxon period. The study site itself was most likely an area of uninhabited land between the nearby settlements, possibly covered by forest or cleared and used for agriculture.
- 12.4** The cartographic sources show the site lay partly within the Coley Park Estate, which had a dairy farm located on the banks of the Holy Brook. The estate was owned by the Vachell family from 1309 until 1727, after which it was passed through several landholders and was eventually divided and sold to the Reading Corporation in 1956. As the study site was located at the far west end of the Coley Park Estate, if medieval and post-medieval remains are encountered they are likely to relate to the woodland area, the estate's boundary, buried cultivation soils and residual finds.
- 12.5** The proposed development will comprise the construction of 46 new homes including a mixture of houses and flats, re-configure the parking courts and mews', improve the central amenity space, and preserve and enhance the landscape features. The new flats and houses will be 3 and 4-storeys high and will require significant foundations.
- 12.6** Due to the medium potential for encountering prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval finds and features, and in light of the total loss of any potential archaeological remains through the foundations of the proposed new buildings, some form of archaeological mitigation may be required. It is suggested that this mitigation could take the form of an appropriately worded condition attached to an approved planning consent, rather than any pre-determined action.

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