University of Reading
Land between the Student's Union and Palmer Buildings
Reading
Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

October 2006

Client: Stride Treglown on behalf of the University of Reading

Issue No.: 1
OA Job No.: 3323
Planning Ref No.: F/2005/6318
NGR: SU 7351 7188
**Client Name:** Stride Treglown on behalf of The University of Reading

**Client Ref No:**

**Document Title:** University of Reading, Land between the Student’s Union and Palmer Buildings, Reading, Berkshire

**Document Type:** Watching Brief

**Issue Number:** 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Grid Reference:</th>
<th>SU 7351 7188</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Reference:</td>
<td>F/2005/6318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OA Job Number:</td>
<td>3323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Code:</td>
<td>SHISSCO6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoice Code:</td>
<td>SHISSCWB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Museum:</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum Accession No:</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prepared by:** Dave McNicol  
**Position:** Supervisor  
**Date:** 9th October 2006

**Checked by:** Dan Dodds  
**Position:** Project Manager  
**Date:** 9th October 2006

**Approved by:** Jon Hiller  
**Position:** Senior Project Manager  
**Date:** 9th October 2006

**Document File Location:**  
\Server\Smallworks\PROJECTS\Berkshire BR\Reading RD/7089 Student Services Centre, Reading University WB

**Graphics File Location:** Servergo: RthruZ*SHISSCWB*Student Services*GS*15.09.06

**Illustrated by:** Georgina Slateror

---

**Disclaimer:**  
This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

**Oxford Archaeology**  
© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2006

Janus House  
Oxaca Mews  
Oxford OX2 0ES  
t: (0044) 01865 263800  
f: (0044) 01865 793496  
c: info@oxfordarch.co.uk  
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No. 285627
Archaeological Watching Brief

Contents

Summary .............................................................................................................. 2
1 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 2
   1.1 Scope of work .............................................................................................. 2
   1.2 Location and geology ................................................................................. 2
2 Archaeological and historical background .................................................... 2
3 Project aims and methodology ...................................................................... 3
   3.1 Aims ............................................................................................................ 3
   3.2 Watching brief methodology ..................................................................... 3
4 Results ............................................................................................................ 3
   4.1 Description of deposits .............................................................................. 3
   4.2 Finds ........................................................................................................... 4
   4.3 Palaeo-environmental remains .................................................................. 4
5 Discussion and conclusions .......................................................................... 4
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory .............................................. 5
Appendix 2 Bibliography and references ....................................................... 5
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details .............................................................. 5

List of figures

Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Site plan showing service trenches, Pit A, Pit B
SUMMARY

Between the 19th of July and 4th of September 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the University of Reading, Reading, Berkshire (NGR: SU 7351 7188). The watching brief was commissioned by Stride Treglown on behalf of the University of Reading, to be carried out during all ground works associated with the erection of a new building. The watching brief revealed a large number of modern services running throughout the site and two dubious pit features. No archaeological features were uncovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Between the 19th of July and 4th of September 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the University of Reading, Reading, Berkshire (NGR: SU 7351 7188). The work was commissioned by Stride Treglown on behalf of the University of Reading in respect of the erection of a new building for use as a student services centre with additional new access from the north of the building (Planning Application No. F/2005/6318).

1.1.2 A project brief was set by David Thomason, the Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology (BA, 2005), and OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet these requests (OA, 2006).

1.2 Location and geology

1.2.1 The site is located on the University of Reading Campus, Whiteknights Park, directly to the south west of Whiteknights Lake, Earley (NGR SU 7351 7188) (Fig. 1), lying at approximately 67 m OD. The underlying geology is plateau gravel and London Clay.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1.1 The following background has been reproduced from the Berkshire Archaeology Brief (BA, 2005).

2.1.2 The site has been identified as being of archaeological potential, due to a number of sites in the vicinity which are recorded on the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record for this area.

2.1.3 Various cropmarks are noted within the Whiteknights area of the university, showing as linears, possibly associated with early parish boundaries. Other cropmarks in the area suggest enclosure systems, possibly agricultural with several additional findspots indicating prehistoric and medieval activity.
3 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 To determine the existence or absence of any archaeological remains; and should they be present, to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard.

3.1.2 To determine or confirm the approximate date or range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.

3.1.3 To determine or confirm the approximate extent of the remains.

3.1.4 To determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains.

3.1.5 To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.

3.1.6 To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape.

3.1.7 To determine the implications of the remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity.

3.1.8 To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence.

3.1.9 To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

3.2 Watching brief methodology

3.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during all invasive groundworks. These works included the excavation of service and foundation trenches and the stripping of the site.

3.2.2 Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Photographs were taken using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the OA Field Manual (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Description of deposits

4.1.1 The natural geology (3), a deposit of reddish brown gravelly silt was encountered at an average of 0.8 m below the ground surface throughout the site. This was overlain
by a maximum 0.5 m thick layer of light grey flint gravel and silt (2), which was in
turn overlain by a maximum 0.3 m thick layer of mid grey sandy silt (1), capped by
the modern turf.

4.1.2 A possible sloped pit (Pit A) (Fig. 3) was visible within a service trench section,
although due to health and safety constraints, close inspection was impossible. Pit A
had a width of 3 m at the top, and 0.5 m at the base with a depth of 0.65 m. The
south-eastern edge was near vertical, while the north-western edge sloped sharply. It
was filled with a brownish grey stony silt (5).

4.1.3 Another possible pit (Pit B) (Fig. 4) was visible within a service trench section,
although due to health and safety constraints, close inspection was impossible. It had
a width of 1.3 m and a depth of 0.6 m, with near vertical sides. Pit B was filled with a
greyish black stony silt (6).

4.2 Finds

4.2.1 No finds were recovered from site.

4.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

4.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were identified during the
course of the watching brief.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

5.1.1 A large percentage of the site had been previously truncated by a number of modern
services criss-crossing the area, which would have destroyed any surviving
archaeological features. However two possible pits were observed in the section of
one service trench.

5.1.2 Due to health and safety constraints, close inspection of Pit A was impossible. The
size and shape of the pit coupled with the similarity of its fill (5) to the overlying
subsoil (2), suggests that it was the result of the machine excavators bucket scraping
the side of the trench.

5.1.3 Close inspection of Pit B was also impossible due to health and safety constraints.
The shape of this pit coupled with the close proximity of modern services suggest
that this is also part of the modern truncation seen throughout the site.

5.1.4 All groundworks came down onto the natural gravelly silt (3) which was overlain by
a 0.5 m thick modern levelling layer (2), which was in turn overlain by a 0.3 m thick
layer of topsoil and turf (1). The modern services encountered throughout the site
were all cut into the natural (3) and sealed by the modern levelling layer (2).

5.1.5 No archaeology was uncovered over the course of the watching brief.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1  ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Thickness (m)</th>
<th>Width (m)</th>
<th>Length (m)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Topsoil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Subsoil</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Subsoil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Natural gravelly silt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Deposit</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mid brownish grey stony silt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Deposit</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Brownish grey stony silt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Deposit</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Greyish black stony silt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX 2  BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

BA, 2005 Land between the Student’s Union and The Palmer Buildings, University of Reading, Whiteknights Park, Earley, Wokingham: Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief

IFA, 2001 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs


OA, 2006 University of Reading, Land between the Student’s Union and Palmer Buildings, Reading, Berkshire: Written Scheme Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief

APPENDIX 3  SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: University of Reading, Land between the Student’s Union and Palmer Buildings, Reading, Berkshire

Site code: SHISSC06

Grid reference: SU 7351 7188

Type of watching brief: Monitoring all groundworks

Date and duration of project: 11 days between the 19th of July to 4th of September 2006

Summary of results: Modern services, and two dubious pit features

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Reading museum service in due course
Figure 1: Site location