

University Of Reading, 11KV Cable Trench
Whiteknights Campus, Reading
RG6 6UR

Archaeological Watching Brief





**UNIVERSITY OF READING, 11KV CABLE TRENCH,
WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS,
READING, RG6 6UR**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS, READING, BERKSHIRE, RG6 6UR

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Figure 1: Site Location plan

Figure 2: West facing section of ditch [2804] and South-east facing section of ditch [3006]

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Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Provelio Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a series of trenches for the installation of an 11KV cable, at the University of Reading, Berkshire centred on NGR 473356, 171787.

The archaeological works were carried out in respect of development proposals for the Site for which planning permission has been granted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Wokingham Borough Council (Ref F/2009/0516).

The planning permission was subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work being carried out on the Site in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2009c) that was approved by the Local Authorities Archaeological Advisor (Berkshire Archaeology).

Along the entire length of the pipeline two archaeological features were observed consisting of two linear ditches, which were recorded within the section of the excavated trench. Both ditches are likely to be post-medieval in date.

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Archaeological Watching Brief

Acknowledgements

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The fieldwork was conducted by Mark Williams, Chloe Hunnisett and Matt Rous, who also compiled this report. The illustrations were prepared by Katherine Brandon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Mark Williams.

**UNIVERSITY OF READING, 11KV CABLE TRENCH, WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS,
READING, BERKSHIRE****Archaeological Watching Brief****1 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Provelio Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a series of trenches for the installation of an 11KV cable, at the University of Reading (NGR 473356, 171787) hereafter 'the Site' (Figure 1). The archaeological works were carried out in respect of development proposals for the Site for which planning permission has been granted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Wokingham Borough Council (Ref F/2009/0516).

1.1.2 The planning permission was subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work being carried out on the Site in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2009c) that was approved by the Local Authorities Archaeological Advisor (Berkshire Archaeology).

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site is located within the campus of Reading University south of Whiteknights Lake (Figure 1), and lies at approximately 64m aOD (above Ordnance Datum).

1.2.2 The underlying geology comprises London Clay and Boyn Hill Gravel (BGS, Drift, Sheet 268, Reading).

1.3 Archaeological Background and Potential

1.3.1 The Site is in an area of archaeological potential with archaeological sites of Iron Age and Roman date having been found in the vicinity with Roman and possibly later burials present.

1.3.2 There is potential for landscape features associated with the seat of White Knights Manor that would have been associated with the now demolished White Knights house.

1.3.4 Previous work on the Site by Wessex Archaeology has shown that the area has undergone significant landscaping (WA 2009 a and b) probably removing archaeological deposits that may have been present although isolated pockets of archaeologically significant deposits have been recorded for example at the former Whiteknights Halls where a small ditch with Early and Middle Iron Age pottery was recovered (Wessex Archaeology 2009b).

1.4 Heritage Designations

1.4.1 There are no Scheduled Monuments recorded on the Site. The path of the cable trench does not run adjacent to any Listed Buildings and is not within a Conservation Area.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1.1 The principal aim of the archaeological watching brief was to provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains and to investigate and record these along the extent of the cable trench.

2.2 Fieldwork Methodology

- 2.2.1 Monitoring of groundworks was initially undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in July and August 2009.
- 2.2.2 A total of five cable trenches were excavated at the locations illustrated in **Figure 1** using a trencher excavator. Each of the five cable trenches was given a unique identification as follows: **Trench 28 (B-C)**, **Trench 29 (A-C)**, **Trench 30 (C-D)**, **Trench 31 (D-E)**, and **Trench 32 (E-F)**. **Trenches 29 (A-C)** and **28 (B-C)** were narrower measuring approximately 0.7m in width and incorporating only one cable. **Trenches 30 (C-D)**, **31 (D-E)** and **32 (E-F)** were wider measuring 1.5m in width and incorporating between three and five cables. The wider trenches allowed for more accessible viewing of the exposed sections.
- 2.2.3 At each of the cable trenches field notes were taken to record the depths of stratigraphy of the deposits above the exposed natural geological deposit of clay or gravel. Archaeological features were recorded in section, and their details added to the field notes.
- 2.2.4 The watching brief was maintained in accordance with the relevant standards and guidance set out in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008) and the Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2009c) approved in advance of the groundworks by Wokingham Borough Council.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Details of the individual contexts and features are retained in the archive. Summaries of the archaeological contexts can be found in **Appendix 1** and the locations of the two sections are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

3.2 Trench 28 (B-C)

- 3.2.1 **Trench 28** was excavated to a length of approximately 80m on a roughly north-south alignment (**Figure 1**).
- 3.2.2 The trench was excavated on average to a depth of 1.1m, at a width of c.0.7m. Mid brown silty clay topsoil (2801) overlay mid-light brown silty-clay subsoil (2802). This in turn overlay in most areas the underlying natural geological deposits of orange-brown coloured London clay or gravel (2803).

- 3.2.3 A single large east - west aligned ditch [2804] was observed in section at the southern extent of the trench (**Figures 1 and 2**). Fragments of medieval roof tile and a single sherd of post-medieval redware pottery were recovered from fill (2806). The south side of the ditch was cut by a modern pipe trench.

3.3 Trench 29 (A-C)

- 3.3.1 **Trench 29** was excavated to a length of approximately 310m on a roughly east-west alignment (**Figure 1**)

- 3.3.2 The trench was excavated on average to a depth of 0.9m - 1m, at a width of c.0.7m. Mid brown silty clay topsoil (2901) overlay mid-light brown silty-clay subsoil (2902). This in turn overlay in most areas the natural (2903) underlying geological deposits of orange-brown coloured London clay or gravel.

- 3.3.3 No archaeological features were identified within the trench, and no artefacts were recovered. Within the sections of the trench a number of modern field drains were observed within the top of the natural running approximately north-south and parallel with the cable trench.

3.4 Trench 30 (C-D)

- 3.4.1 **Trench 30** was excavated to a length of approximately 160m on a roughly northeast - southwest alignment (**Figure 1**).

- 3.4.2 The trench was excavated on average to a depth of 1.2m, at a width of c.1.5m. Mid yellow-brown silty clay topsoil overlay mid yellow-brown silty-clay subsoil. This in turn overlay deposits of natural sand and gravels and orange-brown coloured London clay.

- 3.4.3 A shallow south-east - north-west aligned ditch was observed in section towards the north-eastern end of the trench (**Figures 1 and 2**). From this small ditch fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material were recovered.

3.5 Trench 31 (D-E)

- 3.5.1 **Trench 31** was excavated to a length of approximately 190m on a roughly east-west and then northeast-southwest alignment (**Figure 1**).

- 3.5.2 The trench was excavated on average to a depth of 1.2m, at a width of c.1.2m. Mid yellow-brown silty clay topsoil overlay mid yellow-brown silty-clay subsoil. This in turn overlay deposits of natural sand and gravels.

- 3.5.3 No archaeological features were identified within the trench, and no artefacts were recovered.

3.6 Trench 32 (E-F)

- 3.6.1 **Trench 32** was excavated to a length of approximately 90m on a roughly east - west alignment (**Figure 1**).

3.6.2 The trench was excavated on average to a depth of 1.15m, at a width of c.1.2m. Mid yellow-brown silty clay topsoil overlay mid yellow-brown silty-clay subsoil. This in turn overlay deposits of natural sand and gravels which were iron stained in places.

3.6.3 No archaeological features were identified within the trench, and no artefacts were recovered.

3.7 Trench 33 (F-G)

3.7.1 **Trench 33** was excavated to a length of approximately 140m on a roughly northeast - southwest alignment (**Figure 1**).

3.7.2 The trench was excavated and backfilled before any archaeological monitoring could take place.

3.8 Finds

3.8.1 A very small quantity of finds was recovered, deriving from features in two trenches, 28 (ditch 2804) and 30 (ditch 3006). All finds were ceramic (see **Table 1**).

3.8.2 The single sherd of pottery, from trench 28, is a post-medieval redware; this cannot be dated more closely within the post-medieval period.

3.8.3 The ceramic building material (CBM) comprised four fragments of medieval roof tile from trench 28, and three fragments of post-medieval brick from trench 30.

3.8.4 The single piece of fired clay, from trench 28, is of uncertain date and origin.

Table 1: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

Context	Feature	CBM	Fired Clay	Pottery
2806	ditch 2804	4/122	1/33	1/31
3007	ditch 3006	3/709		
TOTALS		7/831	1/33	1/31

4 DISCUSSION

4.1.1 The project was only partially successful in achieving its aims and objectives. This was partially due to the constraints made by the size and width of the trenches. The potential for observing any archaeological deposits was poor given that **Trench 28** and **Trench 29** were approximately 0.7m wide. Along the entire length of the pipeline spoil was scanned for finds, but no datable evidence was recovered.

4.1.2 Along the entire length of the pipeline only two archaeological features were observed consisting of two linear ditches which were observed within the section of the excavated trench. Both ditches are likely to be post-medieval in date.

5 REFERENCES

- British Geological Survey, 1946, *Reading*, Sheet 268 (Drift), 1:63,360
- Institute for Archaeologists, 2008, *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.
- Wessex Archaeology 2009(a) *Land South of Childs Hall, Upper Redlands Road, University of Reading, Berkshire* unpublished archive report WA 71100.02
- Wessex Archaeology 2009(b) *Land at Former Whiteknights Halls, Upper Redlands Road, University of Reading, Berkshire* unpublished archive report WA 71100.03
- Wessex Archaeology, 2009(c), *University of Reading, 11KV Cable Trench, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Ref: T12580.04

APPENDIX 1: Tables of trench descriptions

Trench 28 (B-C)	Length	Width
	c.80m	0.7m
Context No	Description	Depth
2801	Topsoil, thin grass cover with shallow rooting. Mid-brown sandy clay loam with gravel (<5%, sub-rounded - sub-angular, <50mm diameter)	0 - 0.2m
2802	Subsoil. Mid-light brown sandy clay with frequent gravel (<30%, sub-rounded - sub-angular, <60mm diameter)	0.21 - 0.32m
2803	Natural clay. Orange-brown clay with no inclusions.	0.33 - 1.1m
2804	Cut of linear ditch observed in both sections.	0.2 - 1.1m
2805	Lower fill and primary deposit of ditch [2804]. Mid grey-brown silty clay with frequent unsorted gravel (<30%, <70mm, sub-rounded - sub-angular).	0.6 - 1.1m
2806	Fill of ditch [2804]. Light grey-brown silty clay with unsorted gravel (<15%, <50mm, sub-rounded - sub-angular). Occasional CBM, pot and charcoal flecks.	0.2 - 0.6m
2807	Upper fill of linear ditch [2804]. Mid-brown silty clay with frequent unsorted gravel (<80%, sub-rounded - sub-angular, <40mm diameter). Compact layer - possibly surface? Disturbed by rootlets.	0.8 - 0.24m
2808	Cut of modern pipe trench. V shaped.	0 - 0.64m
2809	Fill of modern pipe trench [2808]. Modern plastic pipe at base. Mid grey-brown sandy clay with gravel (<5%, sub-rounded - sub-angular, <40mm diameter)	0 - 0.64m

Trench 29 (A-B)	Length	Width
	c.310m	0.7m
Context No	Description	Depth
2901	Topsoil, thin grass cover with shallow rooting. Mid-brown sandy clay loam with gravel (<5%, sub-rounded - sub-angular, <50mm diameter).	0 - 0.18m
2902	Subsoil. Mid-light brown sandy clay with frequent gravel (<30%, sub-rounded - sub-angular, <60mm diameter)	0.19 - 0.37m
2903	Natural clay. Orange-brown clay with no inclusions. In some places along the length of the cable trench large patches of poorly sorted sub-rounded - sub-angular gravel were present within matrix of orange-brown sandy clay (ratio of 70/30 gravel/matrix <60mm diameter.) Several field drains observed running approx. N-S in upper level of deposit.	0.38 - 0.9m

Trench 30 (C-D)	Length	Width
	c.160m	1.5m
Context No	Description	Depth
3001	Topsoil, thin grass cover with shallow rooting. Mid brown silty sandy loam with occasional gravel (sub-angular)	0 - 0.3m
3002	Subsoil. Mid orange-brown silty sandy loam with gravel (Sub-angular, rare, 60mm in diameter). Compact and uniform.	0.3 - 0.45m
3003	Mid yellow brown silty sand with frequent poorly sorted gravel (sub-angular, <70mm diameter)	0.45 - 0.65m
3004	Natural. Yellow-brown sand with frequent poorly sorted gravel (sub-angular, <70mm diameter)	0.65 - 0.72m
3005	Natural. Orange-brown clay with occasional grey mottling. Few inclusions with the exception of v. occasional gravel.	0.72 - 1.2m
3006	Cut of ditch. Shallow linear ditch observed in both sections. Single fill.	0.31 - 0.75m
3007	Fill of ditch [3006] Pale brown silty-loam with frequent poorly sorted gravel (sub-angular, <70mm). Unfrogged post-med brick fragments.	0.31 - 0.75m

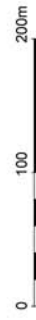
Trench 31 (D-E)	Length	Width
	c.190m	1.5m
Context No	Description	Depth
3101	Topsoil, thin grass cover with shallow rooting. Mid yellow-brown silty sandy loam with occasional gravel (sub-angular).	0 - 0.3m
3102	Subsoil. Pale yellow-brown sandy loam with moderate gravel (Sub-angular, <50mm in diameter).	0.3 - 0.5m
3103	Natural. Yellow-brown sand with rare poorly sorted gravel (sub-angular, <70mm diameter).	0.5 - 0.88

Trench 32 (E-F)	Length	Width
	c.90m	1.5m
Context No	Description	Depth
3201	Topsoil, thin grass cover with shallow rooting. Mid brown silty sandy loam with occasional gravel (sub-angular).	0 - 0.35m
3202	Subsoil. Pale yellow-brown sandy loam with moderate gravel (Sub-angular, <60mm in diameter).	0.35 - 0.55m
3203	Mid yellow brown sandy loam with frequent poorly sorted gravel (sub-angular, <70mm diameter)	0.55 - 0.78m
3204	Natural. Yellow-brown sand with rare poorly sorted gravel (sub-angular, <70mm diameter). Iron staining.	0.78 - 1.15m

Trench	Length	Width
33 (F-G)	c.140m	1.5m
Context No	Description	Depth
3301	Not observed. Backfilled	



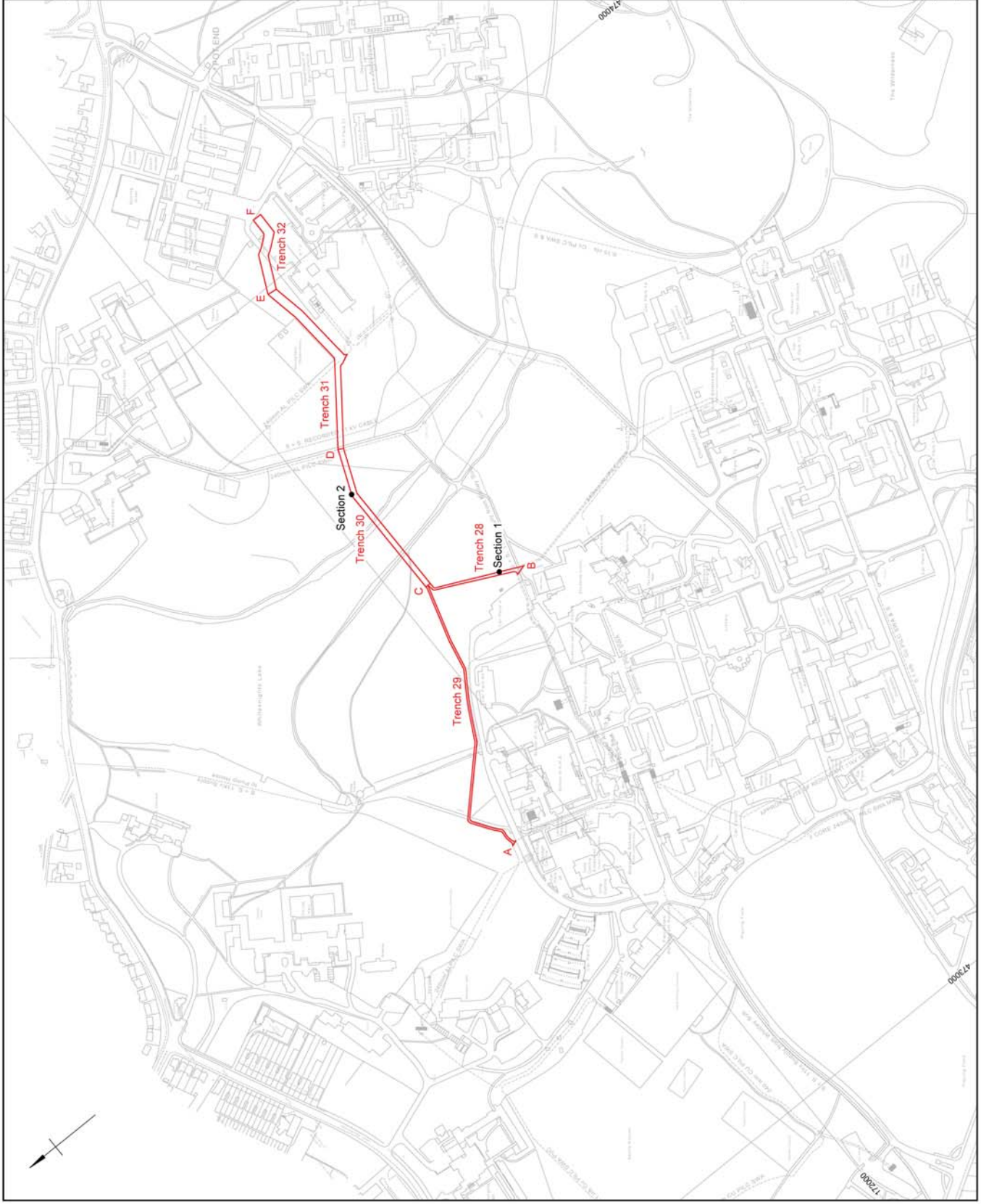
Watching Brief trench



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Scale:	1:80 000 & 1:4000 @ A3
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Figure 1



Site location plan



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