

# New Social Housing Evenlode Drive Berinsfield Oxon



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

September 2003

**Client: Bovis Homes**

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## New Social Housing, Berinsfield, Oxfordshire

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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Fig. 1 Site locations

Cover Plate: General view of foundations at Lodden Road site looking south.

## SUMMARY

*From June to August 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at three individual sites at Berinsfield, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 5740 9636). The work was commissioned by Bovis Homes through CPM Consulting in advance of new social housing by South Oxfordshire Housing Association. The watching brief revealed no archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief. This was probably due to the fact that the site has seen extensive landscaping and grading for the former airfield here.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 From June to August 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at three individual sites at Berinsfield, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Bovis Homes through CPM Consulting in respect of a planning application for new social housing by South Oxfordshire Housing Association (Planning Application Nos P00/W1005/0 and P00/W1008/0).

1.1.2 A project brief was discussed between Oxford Archaeology and Oxfordshire's County Archaeologist, Paul Smith, for a formal programme of archaeological observation on the three sites. CPM Consulting commissioned OA to undertake the watching brief on behalf of Bovis Homes Ltd who are constructing the housing.

1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The proposal site is within Berinsfield at NGR SU 5744 9643. The site lies at c. 52 m OD and the underlying geology is 1st Floodplain Terrace Gravels. The village of Berinsfield overlies an area previously quarried for gravel in the 1930s. During the second world war in 1943 an airfield was constructed and used by the USAAF and later the RAF till the late 1940's.

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA 2002) and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 The area surrounding Berinsfield, near Dorchester-on-Thames, is rich in archaeological remains of all periods. To the south and south-west is the well known prehistoric cursus monument that extends from Amey's pit at Burcot to Queenford Farm, with the adjacent Big Rings Henge.

1.3.3 The Roman Road from Dorchester to Alchester passes just west of the two development sites. In the 1930s, Allen's gravel pit was the site of a Roman pottery kiln and a rubbish dump excavated in 1936. Other finds included a puddling hole.

Published notes in *Oxoniensia* in 1937 and 1938 reveal that other discoveries east of the kiln site included a crouched inhumation and early iron age pottery, 2nd century structural remains and a further pottery kiln with evidence for red colour coated ware dated from the 4th century onwards (*Oxoniensia* Vols 1, 2, 3, 1936, 1937, 1938).

- 1.3.4 To the south-east at Whalley Corner was the site of the Anglo Saxon cemetery excavated by OA in the 1970s (OA, 1995), where prehistoric and Roman features were also identified.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The methodology for the three different sites were the same (Fig. 1). After the site was cleared the foundation trenches were excavated by machine with a 0.6 m wide bucket and excavated to a depth of 1.2 m.
- 2.2.2 The trenches were then poured with concrete. This was not done under archaeological supervision and only a limited amount of excavation on the sites were observed during the site visits. Nonetheless, the general types of layers observed during site visits suggest that no archaeological features or finds were missed. Soil was monitored for the presence of finds.
- 2.2.3 A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The trenches cut into a dark grey blue clay with lenses of gravel. This was sealed below a 0.2 m thick disturbed very dark grey brown silty clay topsoil.

### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

### 3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

#### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 Despite limited observation, the evidence of the clay layers exposed in the trenches, indicates that the site had been graded, this activity more than likely being undertaken during the construction phases of the sites was an airfield during the second world war.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

D Wilkinson ed. 1992, *OAU Fieldwork Manual*

OA 2002 New Social Housing, Evenlode Drive, Berinsfield, Oxon Written Scheme of Investigation

## APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** New Social Housing, Berinsfield, Oxfordshire

**Site code:** BENSH 02

**Grid reference:** NGR SU 5744 9643

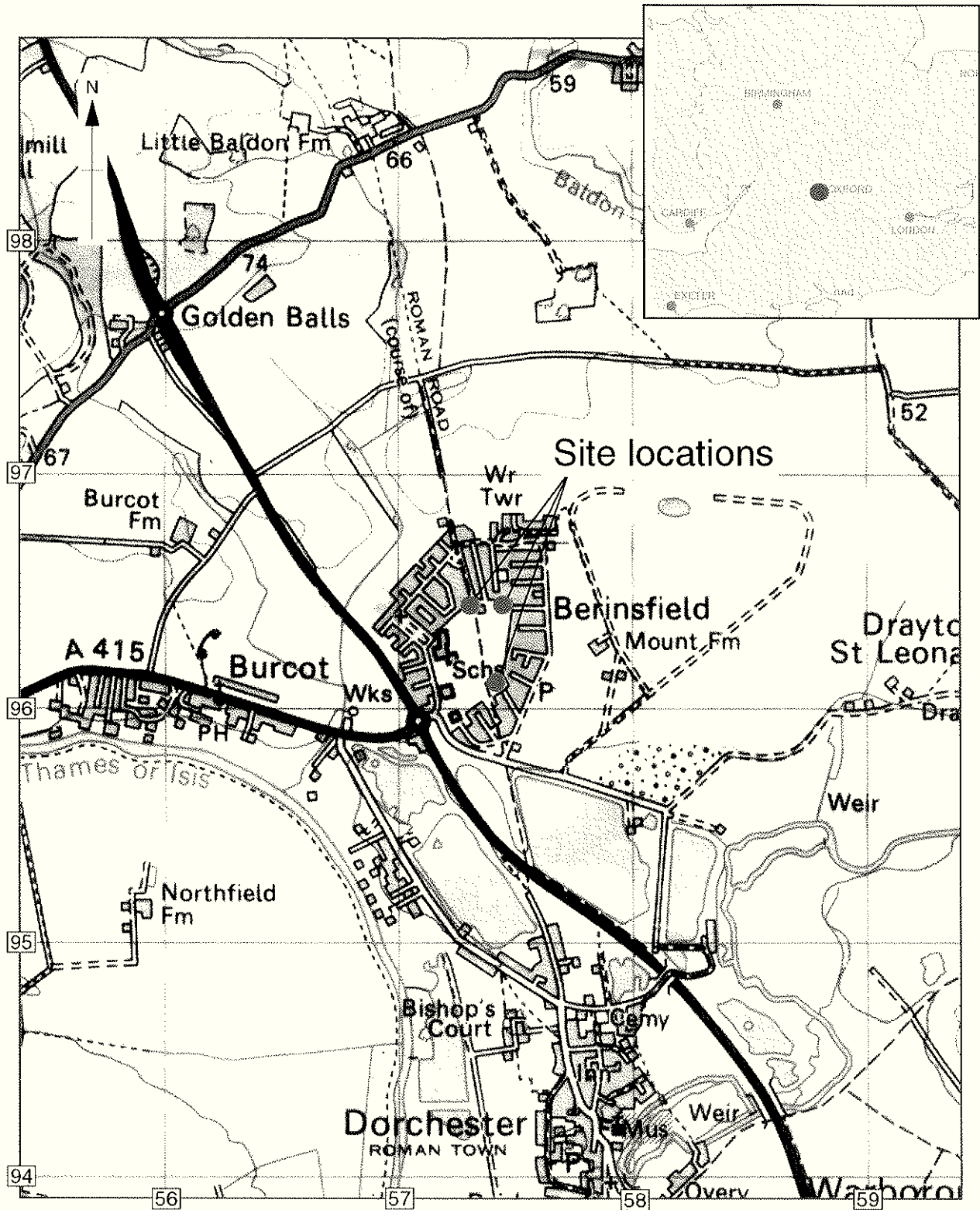
**Type of watching brief:** ground work for new housing development.

**Date and duration of project:** Four site visits from the 20/6/2003 to 15/8/2003.

**Area of sites:** 50 m x 60 m, 70 m x 80 m and 90 m x 60 m

**Summary of results:** No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief. This was properly due landscaping and grading for the former airfield.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS 2002.170



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Figure 1: Site locations

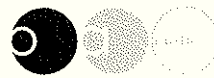




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