

Your ref:
Our ref: 95/21

1st May 1995

Mr. Robert Budd,
Newbury District Council,
Council Offices,
Market Street,
NEWBURY,
Berkshire,
RG14 5LD

Dear Mr Budd,

RE: Wash Common Recreation Ground - Archaeological Watching Brief.

This letter is to confirm the completion of the archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks prior to the refurbishment of the playground at Wash Common (SU 4545 6482). Monitoring was carried out between 26th March and 21st April, following the granting of Scheduled Monument consent by English Heritage and a brief approved by Ms Anne Upson, archaeological advisor to Berkshire County Council (Babtie). The site code is WCN95.

The archaeological importance of the site derives from its location within the area of scheduled monument BK12075. This covers the remains of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery which now consists of two bowl barrows and a disc barrow. These are roughly in an alignment northwest-southeast, the disc barrow being at the northwest, and the most southeasterly bowl barrow only surviving as a slight earthwork. Investigation in other barrow cemeteries has revealed that contemporary or later 'flat' burial often exist between the mounds. The location of the play area between the upstanding bowl barrow and the levelled example meant that there was a possibility that such flat burials may be encountered during groundworks.

The playground occupies an area of just over 309 square metres. Initial ground disturbance involved stripping a thin layer of topsoil; this was monitored but the topsoil was not stripped down to clean bedrock and no archaeological remains were revealed. Following this a number of trenches and holes were dug as foundations for play equipment and fences.

About 8 m. of trench 0.25 m. wide was dug, to a depth of 0.1 m. This effectively removed only made ground and did not penetrate the subsoil; occasionally this was visible in the bottom of the trench as gravel. The spoilheap was monitored for finds but none were present.

Two holes were dug in the southwestern sector of the play area; these were 1 m. x 1 m. and 0.5 m. deep. A further hole in the northeastern corner measure 0.7 m. x 1 m. and 0.5 m. deep. Typically the sections of these holes were made up of 0.1 m. made ground and residual topsoil, overlying 0.4 m. of clayey gravel. No archaeological finds or features were observed in these holes, and no finds were recovered from the spoil.

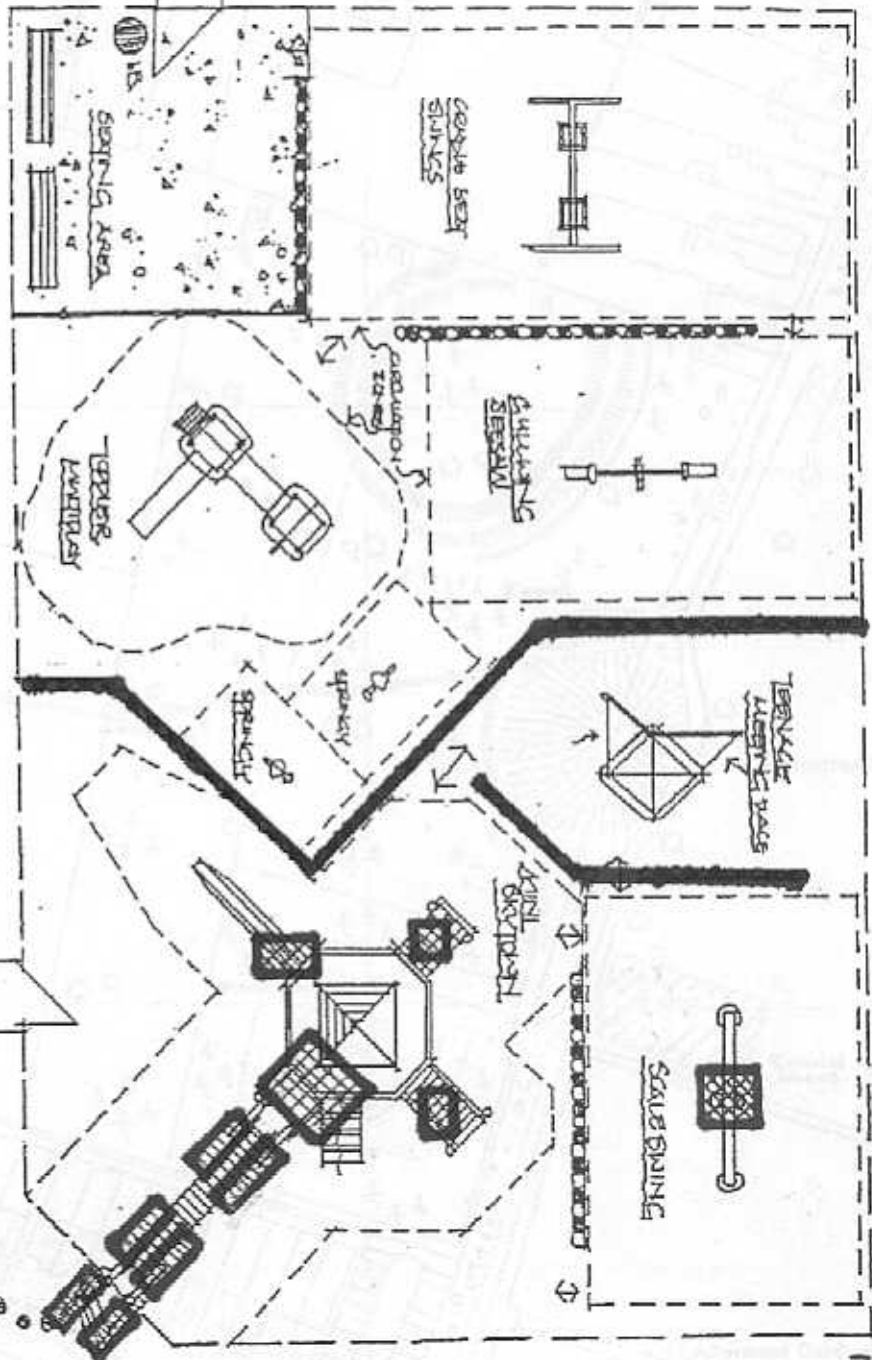
A further ten holes were excavated in the southeastern sector of the play area. These varied in size from 0.8 m. x 0.2 m. at the smallest to 1.3 m. x 1.3 m. at the largest. The depth of these holes ranged from 0.3 m. to 0.6 m. deep. Typically 0.2 - 0.3 m of made ground overlaid orange gravel, where the holes were deep enough (more than 0.3 m.) for this to be exposed. The two holes outside the entrance to the play area revealed 0.2 m. of topsoil over yellowish sand. No archaeological deposits were observed in the holes and no finds were recovered from the spoil.

To conclude, all ground disturbance was monitored, but nothing of archaeological significance was discovered. A plan indicating the position of all holes and trenches observed is attached.

Yours sincerely,

Dr T. Durden

cc. Anne Upson (Babtic)
Roger Thomas (English Heritage)



N

the
playground
people

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mda consultants
play and landscape architects

HOLES AND TRENCHES
MONITORED

mda consultants

Client: NEWBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Project: PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT
at WASH COMMON

Drawing: REVISED SKETCH LAYOUT

Drawn by: Lambert/DCI	Approved by:	
Date: 1995	Date: 1995	

play and landscape

COPE HALL LANE

453

454

ESSEX STREET

Common Farm

BM 125.36m

Wash Common Farm Cottages

Olvern

WILKIN WALK

STAPLETON CLOSE

SKIPPONS CLOSE

VILLIERS WAY

Marsh Ck

BATTLE ROAD

STUART ROAD

Recreation Ground

Water Tower

SITE

Cumulus (size of)

Allocation Gardens

Hampden Cottage

1340

