

**Former Riverside Works, West Mills,
Newbury, Berkshire.**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for

McCarthy and Stone (Developments) Ltd.

July 1997

**Former Riverside Works, West Mills, Newbury, Berkshire.
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Keith Cooper

Report 96/53

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the former Riverside works, West Mills, Newbury, Berkshire, (SU463671). The work was commissioned by McCarthy and Stone (Developments) Ltd., Homclife House, 26-32 Oxford Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH8 8EZ. Planning permission was granted by Newbury County Council (application no. 148671) to construct sheltered housing for the elderly, on the condition that an archaeological watching brief be carried out.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note: **Archaeology and Planning** (PPG 16, 1990). The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr. P. Fasham, Principal Archaeologist at Babbie Public Services, archaeological advisors to Berkshire County Council. The field work was undertaken over several months by Andy Smith, Steve Lynch and Keith Cooper between December 1996 and July 1997. The site code is WMN/96.

Location, Topography and Geology

The site is located to the west of Newbury town (Fig. 1) close to the the River Kennet /Kennet and Avon Canal. The site lies on the floor of the valley and has a geology of alluvium over gravel, which was observed in the deeper drainage trench (Fig. 2).

Archaeological Background

The Kennet Valley between Hungerford and Newbury is particularly rich in sites and finds of Mesolithic date although none have been recovered close to this development.

The site lies on the margins of the historic core of the town although the exact limits of the Medieval and early post-Medieval urban areas are not well recorded (Astill 1978). It was thought possible that elements of the early town could have extended as far as the proposal site. The only find in the vicinity of the site recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record is a Henry III longcross penny.

Objectives and Methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. This was achieved by monitoring the excavation of the foundation trenches and deep drainage trench for any archaeological deposits to observe any evidence of settlement activity on this site. The spoil heaps were also monitored for any archaeological artefacts.

Results

The footing trenches to the north and west of site which were the deepest, went to a depth of 1.00 m. The stratigraphy consisted wholly of modern overburden - brick and concrete demolition rubble within a black silty make up. No archaeological features were present or artefacts recovered from spoil heaps. The trenches to the south only went to a maximum depth of 0.60 m. and therefore did not go below the modern overburden. No archaeological features or artefacts observed. A 3.00 m. deep by 2.50

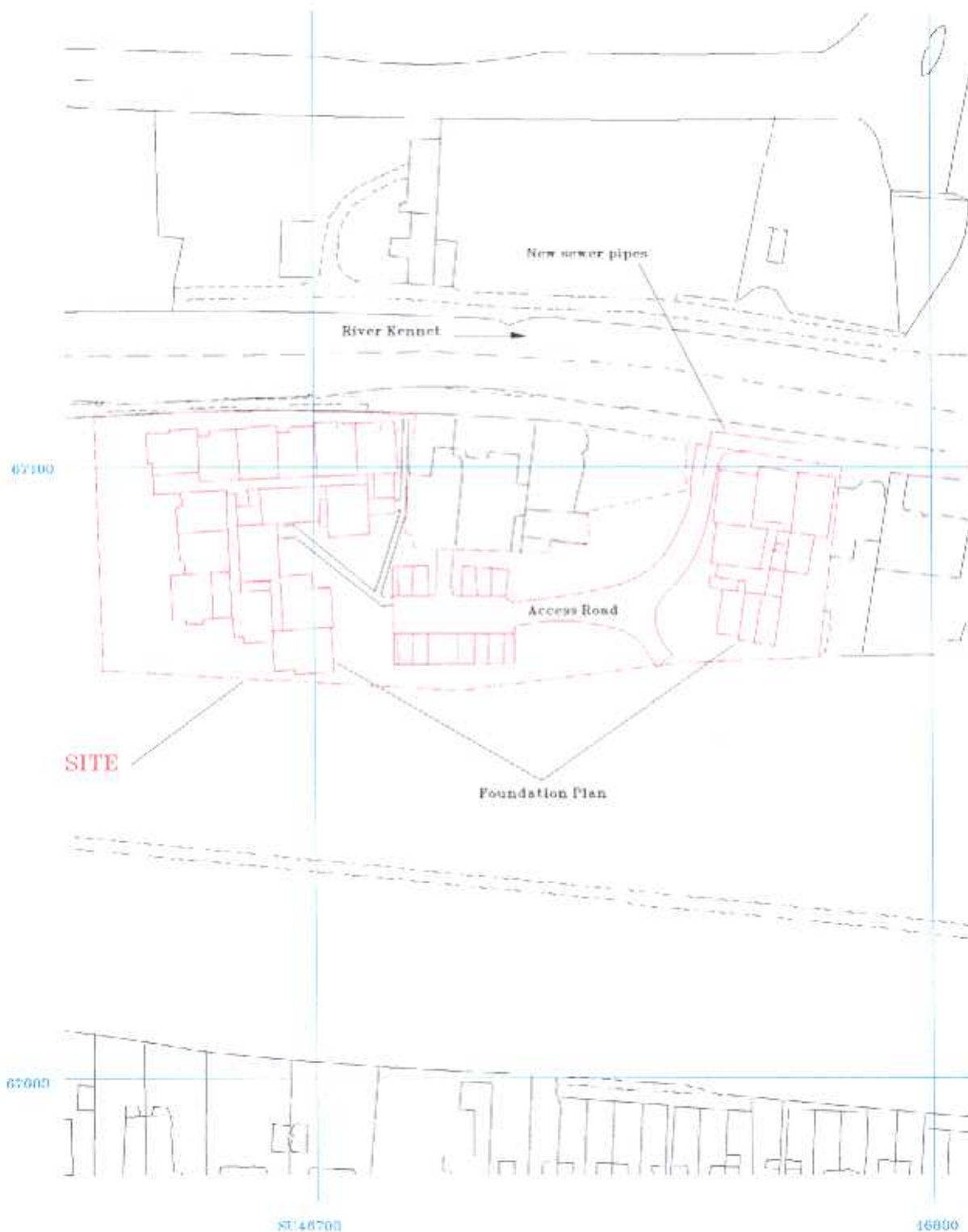
m. square drainage trench/sump was monitored and a representative section was recorded (Fig. 2). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.60 m. depth of modern brick / concrete demolition rubble onto 0.60 m. - 1.00 m. depth of modern black silt and brick overburden. This in turn overlay approximately 2.00 m. of alluvial deposits which comprised a grey/brown clay with a thin lens, 0.10 m. thick, of a black almost peaty material some 1.00 m. down within the alluvium. At the base of the trench a possible peat layer overlying gravel was present. No archaeological features were seen and no artefacts were recovered from the spoil heaps.

Conclusion

No archaeological deposits were observed and no artefacts of archaeological significance were recovered.

References

- ASTILL, G. 1978: **Historic Towns in Berkshire**. Berkshire Archaeological Committee Publication No. 2. Reading.
- BGS, 1947: **British Geological Survey**, 1:63360, Sheet 267, Drift Edition. Keyworth.
- PPG 16, 1990: **Archaeology and Planning**. Department of the Environment
Planning Policy Guidance Note 16. (IIMSO)



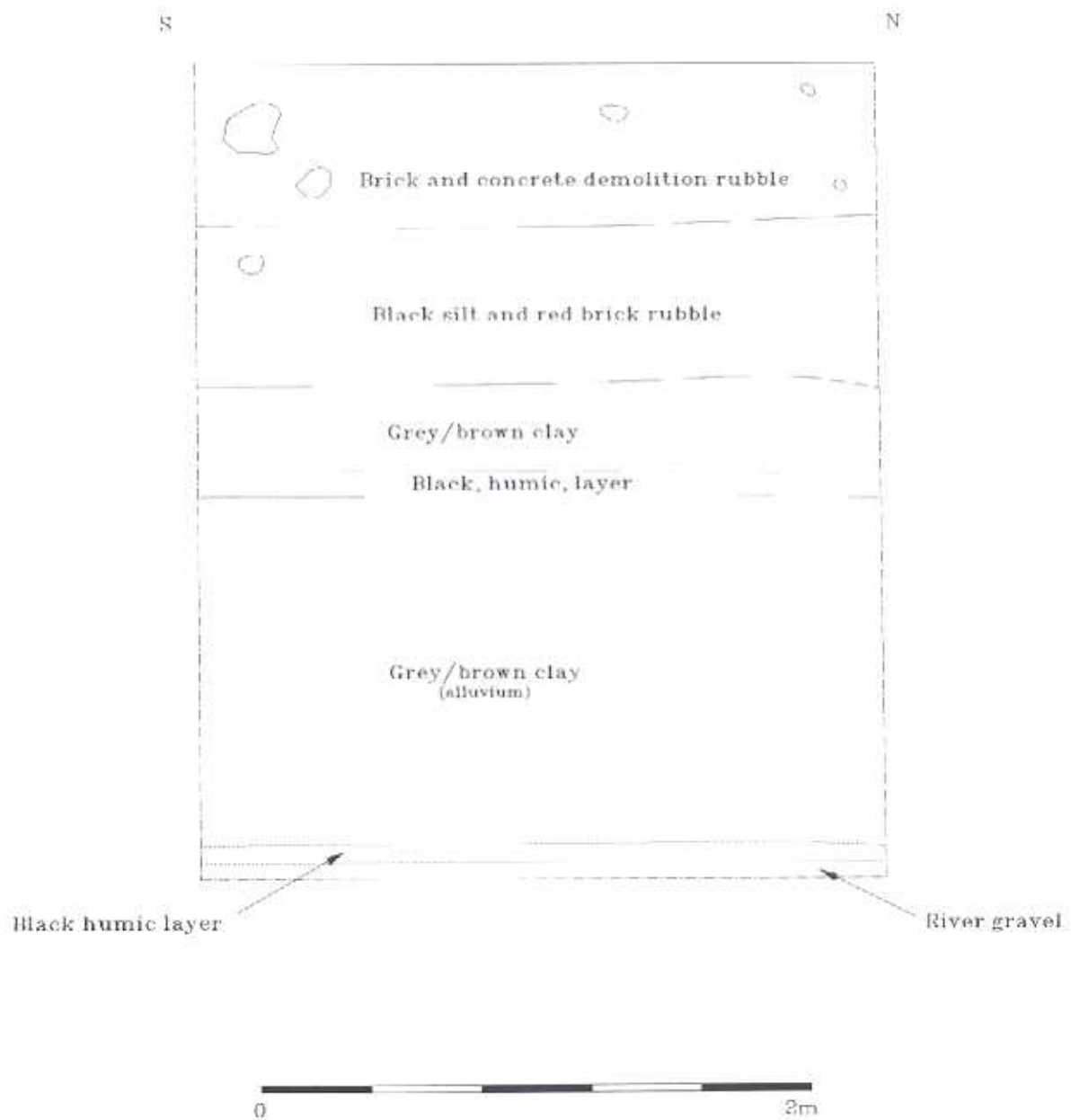
West Mills, Newbury, 1996.

WMN96/53

Figure 2. Location of site showing plan of new development.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Superplan.





West Mills, Newbury, 1996.

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Figure 3. Sketch section through drainage/sump trench.

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