

New Footpath, Lodge Road, Hurst, Twyford, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Groundwork Thames Valley**

by Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code: LRH06/72

September 2006

Summary

Site name: New Footpath, Lodge Road, Hurst, Twyford, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7925 7406- 7916 7335

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 2nd August–16th September 2006

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steve Ford and Jennifer Lowe

Site code: LRH06/72

Summary of results: The majority of the groundworks were superficial and no deposits of archaeological interest were revealed.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

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New Footpath, Lodge Road, Hurst, Twyford, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report 06/72

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during construction of a new footpath adjacent to Lodge Road, Hurst near Twyford, Berkshire (SU 7925 7406- 7916 7335) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Paul Upward of Groundwork Thames Valley, Colne Valley Park Centre, Denham Court Drive, Denham, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB9 5PG.

A planning consent (F/2005/5804) has been granted by Wokingham District Council to construct a new footpath with additional facilities such as gates, fences and footbridges. This consent was subject to a condition relating to archaeology which required a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Thomason, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the District on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford and Jennifer Lowe between 2nd August and 16th September 2006 and the site code is LRH06/72.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the west side of Lodge Road, which lies south of Whistley Green and west of Hurst in the Loddon Valley (Figs 1 and 2). The underlying geology is mapped as Gravel (BGS 1946) and the site lies at a height of c.35m above Ordnance Datum on level ground.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the Loddon Valley which is considered as archaeologically rich with numerous sites recorded from field survey and aerial photography (Ford 1987; Ford 1994; Gates 1975). A number of archaeological sites are recorded to the north. These comprise an excavated Mesolithic occupation site (Harding and Richards 1993); Roman field boundaries (Barnes and Hawkes 1991)

and medieval occupation (Ford 1987). Further Iron Age and Roman occupation was present to the west of the site at Lea Farm where features observed by aerial photography were confirmed by evaluation trenching.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work. This was to involve examination of all areas of topsoil stripping, landscaping, ground reduction and the digging of trenches for foundations as necessary.

Results

The path

The majority of the earth-moving activity comprised topsoil stripping for the new footpath. This entailed the removal of surface vegetation (including trees and saplings in the northern, wooded section) and the uppermost layer of topsoil using a machine fitted with a ditching bucket. The footpath strip was 2m wide but the depth of topsoil removed was of the order of 0.10–0.15m. As such the top of the natural geology (the archaeologically relevant horizon) was not exposed and any cut subsoil deposits of archaeological interest which might be present could not be observed. The stripped surface of the northern section was searched for artefacts but apart from the occasional fragment of brick or tile (not retained) nothing of interest was discovered. A small part of the southern section was also monitored but as the same shallow construction was used, the remainder of this section was not observed. The full length of the footpath as intended to the south of Sawpit Road (Fig. 3) was not completed at this time.

The bridges

Foundations were also monitored for the construction of bridges across shallow ditches. For bridge 1, two trenches were dug using a machine with a toothed bucket. The first measured 2.6m (N–S) by 1.15m wide and was 0.6m deep. It was located at the base of the roadside ditch. The stratigraphy comprised 0.2m of leaf litter above 0.4m of dark blue-grey silty clay. The second trench was 2m (N–S) by 1.15m and 0.35m deep located on the side of the ditch. The stratigraphy comprised 0.2m of leaf litter above brown/grey sandy silt with gravel, which is not considered to represent the natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed nor artefacts recovered in either trench.

The foundations for the second bridge comprised trenching recessed into either side of the roadside ditch. It was 1.9m wide and was dug for 1m either side of the ditch with a maximum depth of 0.4m adjacent to the road

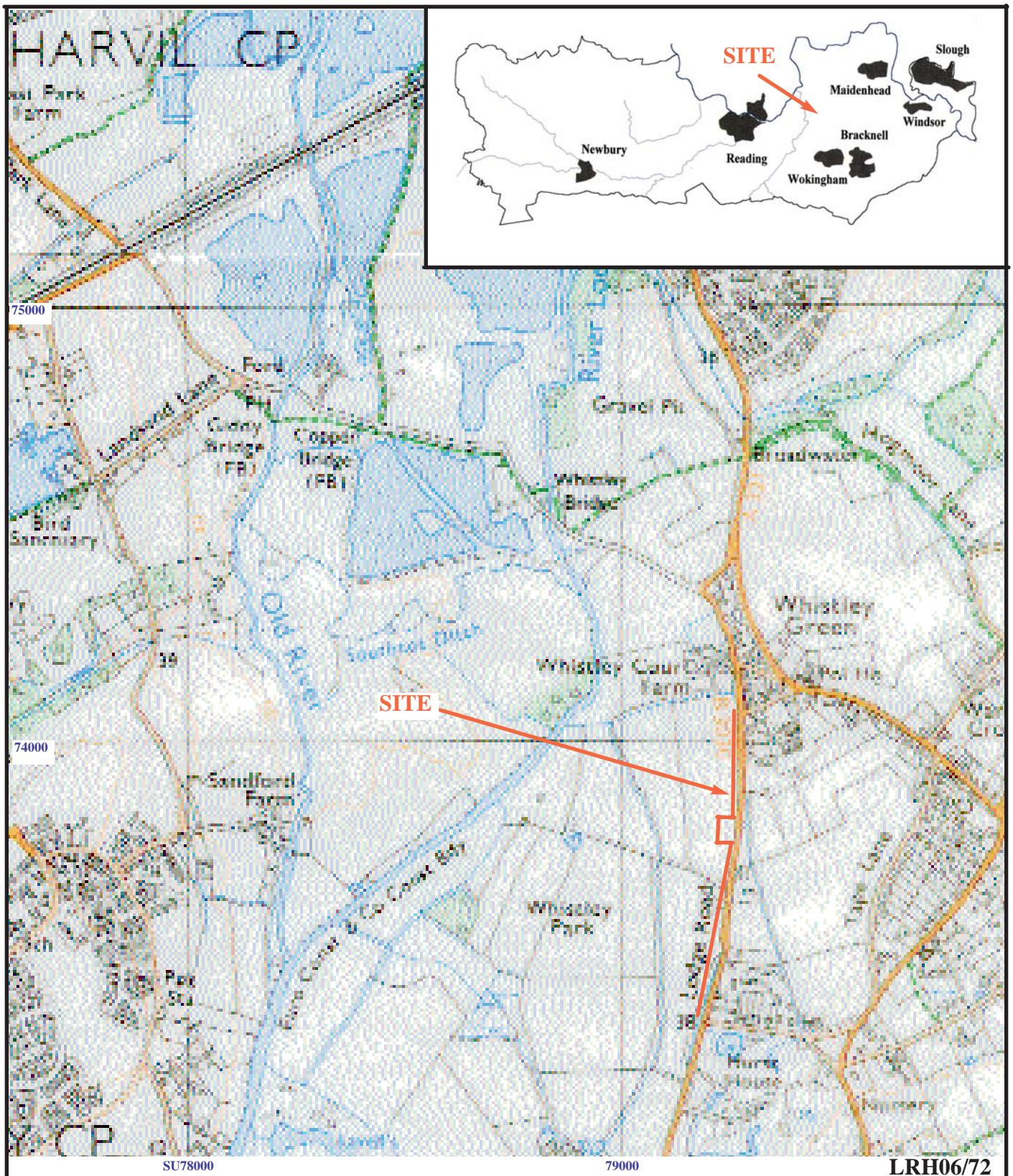
and 0.3m on the opposite side of the ditch. The stratigraphy at either end of the trench comprised grey/brown sandy silt with many roots and modern debris from the road. It is unclear if this represents the natural geology. The surface debris of the existing ditch was removed but did not expose the natural geology. No archaeology was observed.

Conclusion

The groundworks required for construction of the footpath and bridges were superficial with only small areas of deeper digging. As such there were very limited opportunities to observe the archaeologically relevant horizons and no archaeological deposits were observed nor artefacts recovered.

References

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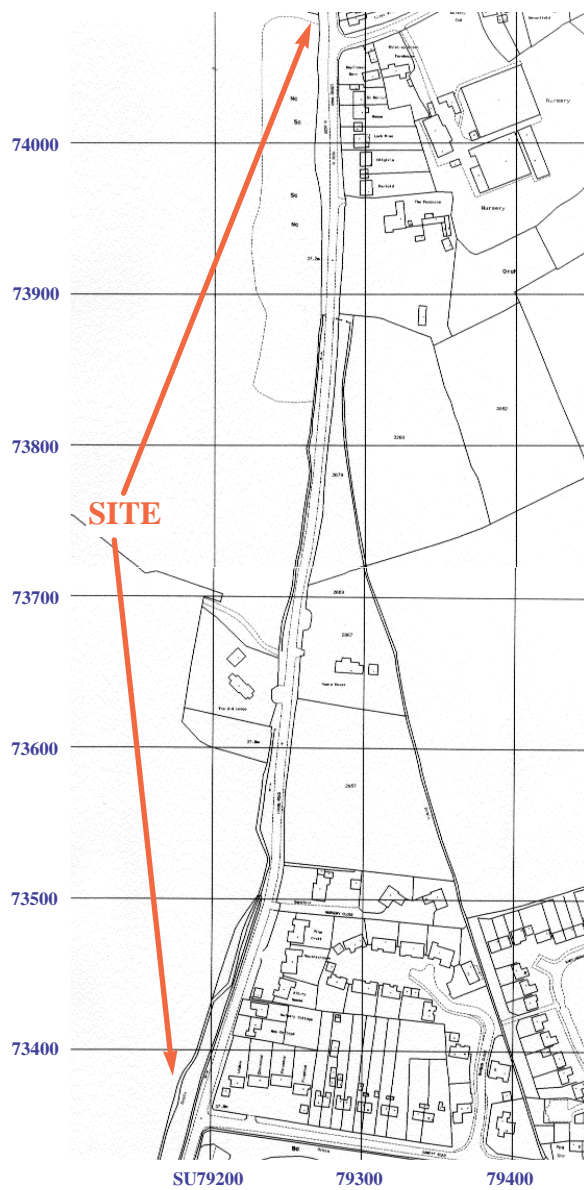


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Figure 1. Location of site within Hurst
and Berkshire.

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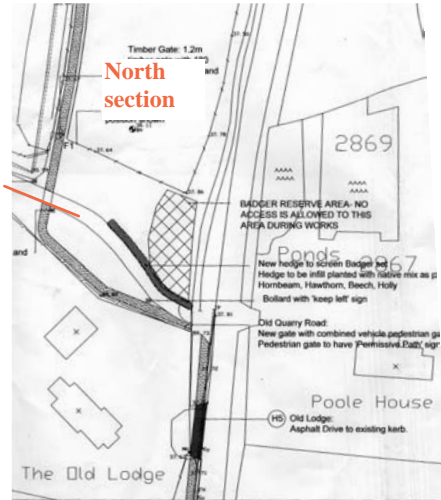
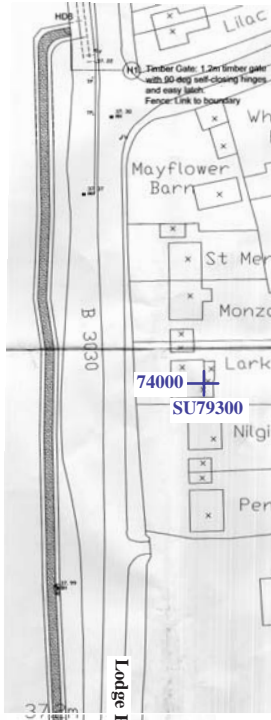
Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Lodge Road.

Scale 1:5000

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North section

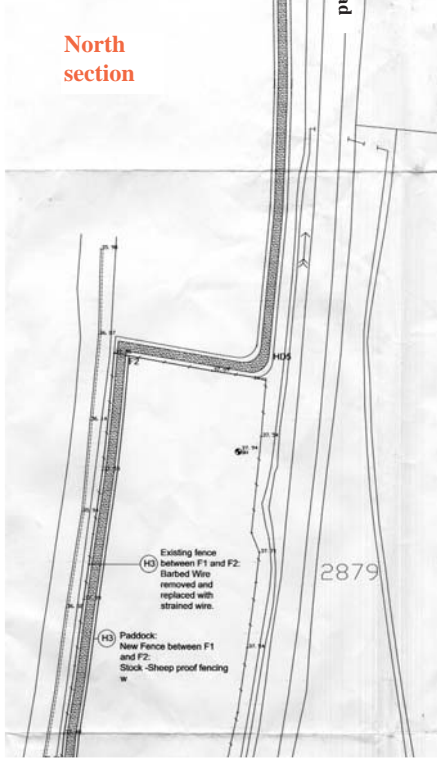


Bridge 2

South section

Bridge 1

end of path



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Figure 3. Detailed location of site.

Scale: 1:2000.

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