

**Moor Lane, Staines,
Surrey**

An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Swan Hill Homes

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MLS00/31

January 2002

Summary

Site name: Moor Lane, Staines, Surrey

Grid reference: TQ 0333 7200

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 14th–15th May 2000, 2nd October 2000, 18th October 2000 and 12th October 2001

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steve Ford, Andy Taylor

Site code: MLS00/31

Area of site: 2.00ha

Summary of results: No archaeology finds or deposits were noted during the watching brief

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, RG1 5NR, and it is intended that it will be deposited with Staines Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 9/1/02
	Steve Preston ✓ 10/01/02

Moor Lane, Staines, Surrey An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report 00/31c

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on land off Moor Lane, Staines, Surrey (TQ 0335 7200) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tony Charles of Charles Planning Associates, 39 Locks Heath District Centre, Locks Heath, Southampton, Hampshire, SO31 6DX, on behalf of Swan Hill Homes, Swan Court, Waterman's Business Park, Kingsbury Crescent, Staines, Middx, TW18 3BA.

Planning permission has been granted by Spelthorne Borough Council (PA/98/0650) for the construction of 149 houses and associated parking and landscaping. One condition of the draft planning permission relates to archaeology. As an initial response to the draft condition, a desktop study was carried out (Ford 2000). This highlighted the high archaeological potential of the site and recommended a field evaluation to confirm this potential and to provide sufficient information to mitigate the effects of the development. As a result of the evaluation (Pine 2000) a field excavation was required in order to determine the extent of the archaeological deposits recorded during the evaluation. The areas of lower potential would be observed by way of watching briefs.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The watching brief described here was carried out to a specification approved by Mr G Jackson, Archaeological Officer of Surrey County Council, archaeological adviser to the Borough Council. The excavation component of the project will form a separate report. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Steve Ford on 14th–15th May 2000, 2nd October 2000, 18th October 2000 and 12th October 2001. The site code is MLS00/31 and the archive will be deposited with Staines Museum.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern side of Moor Lane, which lies on the north-western outskirts of Staines (Figs 1 and 2). It occupies an irregular, roughly triangular, parcel of land c. 2 hectares in area. The river Wryasbury forms the eastern boundary, with the Staines Central Trading Estate beyond, and the western boundary is formed

by Moor Lane and a builder's yard. At the time of the watching briefs, construction work was already well under way throughout the site.

The British Geological Survey (BGS 1981) indicates that the site lies on alluvium. Topographically it is located on the floodplain of the river Wraysbury, which is a part of a complex drainage pattern where the river Colne and associated channels meet the Thames. To the west of the site is river gravel, which would have provided an island of drier land in times of flood. The geology was only noted in the area dug out for the culvert (Area C), the other areas did not penetrate deep enough.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in the desk-based assessment (Ford 2000). This provided a comprehensive survey of the archaeological deposits in the immediate vicinity using a cartographic study, interpretation of geotechnical data and a search of the Surrey Sites and Monuments Record. In summary, the proposal site lies in an area of the Thames Valley rich in archaeology and sites/finds have been recorded on land on either side of the proposal area. These deposits include flint tools of Upper Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Bronze Age dates. Cut features include ditches, pits and pottery of Bronze Age, Roman and late Saxon date and building remains of medieval date.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching briefs was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development but outside the area of excavation. This was to be achieved by observing the culvert trench being dug and a series of stripped areas around the development sites (Fig. 1). A written, drawn and photographic record of the trench and stripped areas was made.

Results

Area A

This area was situated at the northernmost point of the site. The area was stripped to a depth of 0.50m and showed clinker-filled stripes on the western side and on the eastern side, a blue clay. The western end of evaluation Trench 1 was revealed but only enough overburden was stripped to show the original ground level. The natural geology was not exposed. No archaeological finds or deposits were expected at this level and none was present.

Area B

This area was situated towards the centre of the eastern edge of the site, close to the route of the river Wraysbury. This area was stripped to a depth of 0.68m. It measured 1.20m in width at the southern end then varied between 2.50m and 2.80m between the edge of the house and limit of the stripped area towards the centre. At the northern end the width was 4.65m. The section showed 0.33m of grey/brown made ground overlying 0.35m of sandy yellow/brown made ground. No archaeological finds or deposits were present and the natural geology was not exposed.

Area C- Culvert trench

This was 60m long, between 4.00m and 5.60m wide and between 2.10m and 2.50m deep. The trench for the box culvert was dug under direct and continuous archaeological supervision. This area had been severely disturbed by earlier services and buildings relating to the railway and oil terminal. The sections illustrated made ground between 0.40m and 0.80m deep (not including disturbances which were over 2.00m deep in places) overlying various layers of sandy clays (alluvial deposits) between 1.50m–1.70m deep onto gravel. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Area D

This area was situated to the east of plots 32 and 33 and was stripped to a depth of 0.20m, which was only enough to reveal the made ground beneath. No archaeological finds or deposits were present.

Area E

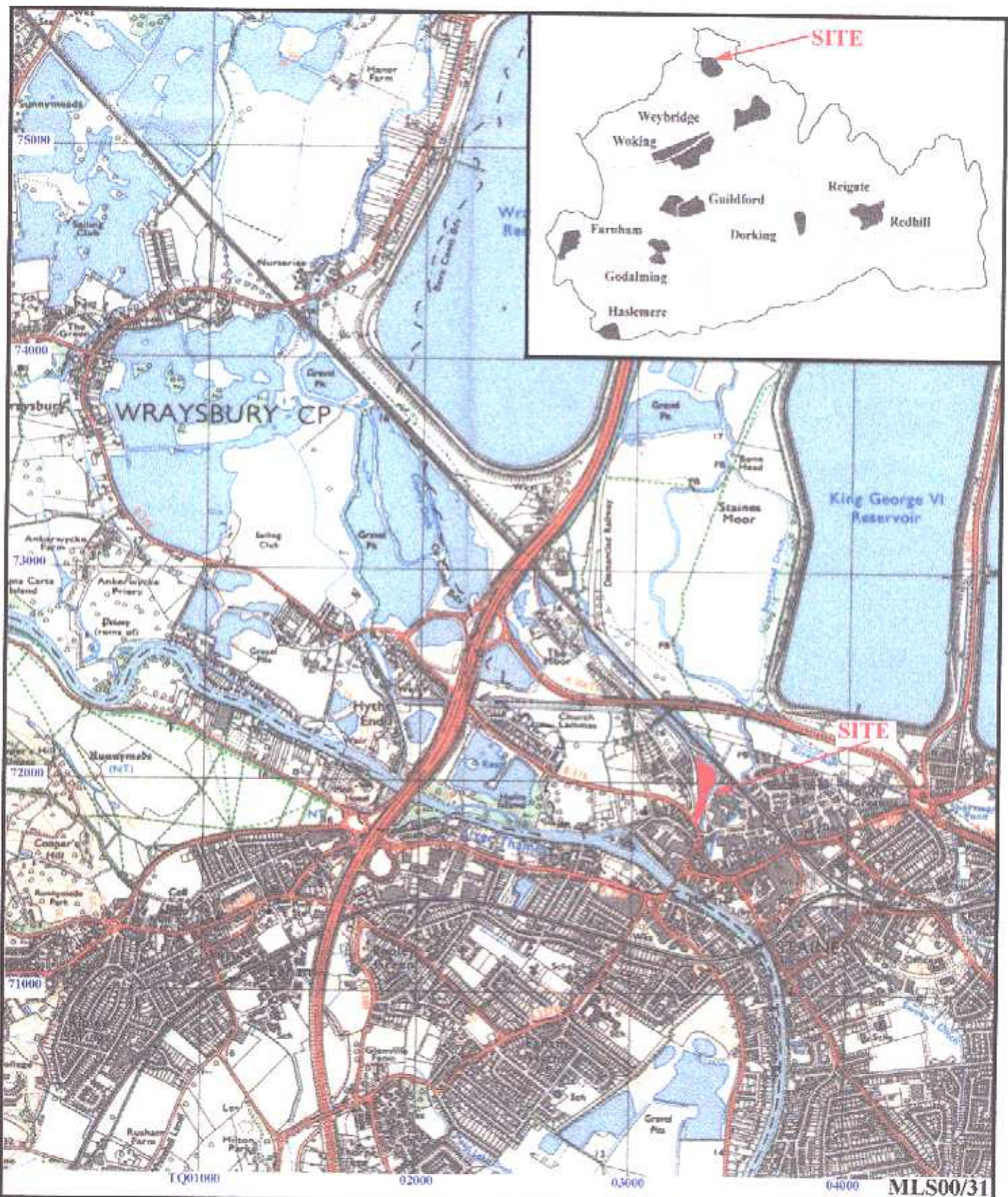
This area was situated to the west of plots 32 and 33 and was stripped to a depth of 0.2–0.4m, which was only enough to reveal the made ground beneath. No archaeological finds or deposits were present.

Conclusion

The watching briefs did not reveal any archaeological finds or deposits. This is mostly because, with the exception of the culvert trench, the areas were not stripped down any further than the level of the made ground.

References

- BGS, 1982, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 269, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 2000, 'Moor Lane Staines, An archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 00/31, Reading
- Pine, J, 2000, 'Moor Lane Staines, An Archaeological Evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 00/31b, Reading
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO



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Figure 1. Location of site within Staines and Surrey.

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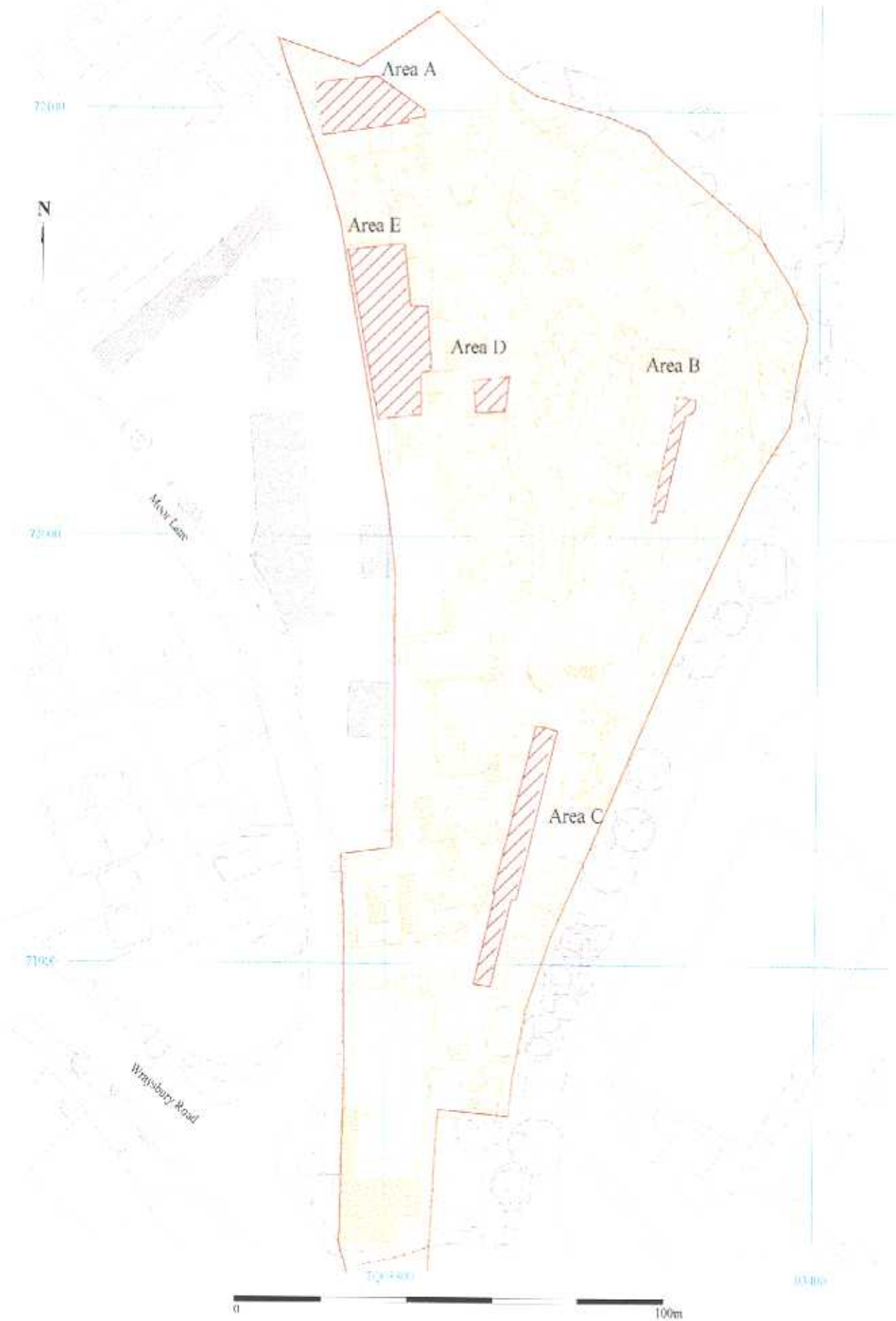


Figure 2. Location of Watching Brief Areas.