

Land at 160 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr G Nixon

by Pamela Jenkins and Jo Pine

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code NFW05/140

January 2006

Summary

Site name: Land at 160 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7933 6475

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 13th January 2006

Project manager: Joanna Pine

Site supervisor: Joanna Pine

Site code: NFW 05/140

Area of site:

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were identified

Monuments identified: None

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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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 15.02.06
	Steve Preston ✓ 09.02.06

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Report 05/140

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at land at 160 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Berkshire (SU7933 6475) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Gareth Nixon of Bridge House, Hartfordbridge, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8AF.

Planning consent (O/2004/3115) has been granted by Wokingham District Council to demolish an existing house on the site and replace it with three new houses and associated amenities. This planning permission is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which requires 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 Ms Fiona MacDonald, Principal Archaeologist for Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Joanna Pine between 4th and 18th January 2006 and the site code is NFW 05/140.

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 south side of Nine Mile Ride in Finchampstead, north of woodland at Warren Lane and south-east of Longmoor Lake (Fig. 2). The site consisted of a demolished house plot and its former gardens and driveway. The geology is described as Lower Bagshot Beds (BGS 1946), and orange/beige/yellow sand with occasional gravel beds was observed on site. The site was relatively level at *c.* 70m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The site lies within an area of East Berkshire with only a moderate range of finds and deposits recorded within the Sites and Monuments Record. However, locally to the site, archaeological remains are more frequently recorded. As highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Fiona MacDonald the site is only *c.* 200m to the north-west of a small round barrow cemetery probably of Bronze Age date comprising a large bell barrow which

is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and at least one further Bronze Age bowl barrow (BA 2005). It is anticipated that contemporary occupation deposits will be present nearby. Further to the south is the Roman road from London to Silchester and a Roman villa visible from the air (Ford 1987).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved the examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any ground reduction and the digging of foundation trenches and service runs.

Results

The area of the three house plots (1, 2 and 3) was stripped of topsoil and overburden prior to the excavation of foundation trenches (Fig. 3). Within plots 1 and 2 a mix of demolition rubble and topsoil 0.20m deep was removed but no natural geology was exposed at this depth. However in Plot 3, *c.* 12m by 20m, the ground level was reduced by 0.30–0.50m of topsoil onto the natural sand geology. No archaeological features were observed truncating the natural in this area.

The foundation trenches excavated within these stripped areas were *c.* 0.70m wide and 1.00m deep (Fig. 4). In Plot 3 the sections showed (notwithstanding the topsoil removed) bands of sands down to 1.00m. In Plots 1 and 2 the foundation trenches showed topsoil/demolition rubble (notwithstanding as above) 0.10m deep onto bands of beige/yellow/orange sands (the natural geology) down to a depth of 1.00m. Within the southern end of the north-south foundation of Plot 2 (Fig. 3) a cut was observed which contained tile, clinker and pieces of decayed wood/paper in a sandy silt fill and may be associated with the former house or a swimming pool which previously occupied this area.

Three soakaways (1, 2, 3) *c.* 1m by 2m were excavated to the rear of the plots connected by service trenches. Soakaway 1 was fully excavated and the stratigraphy was topsoil 0.20m deep onto bands of light orange and yellow sands to 1.50m below the present ground surface. In soakaways 2 and 3 only the topsoil/or overburden was removed onto the natural geology for the purpose of archaeological observation and they will be completed at a later date. Soakaway 2 showed 0.20m of demolition rubble and topsoil onto orange and yellow sands however, in the western half of the hole a modern disturbance filled with broken concrete was noted. Soakaway 3 was excavated through a garden path and showed concrete onto scalpins 0.30m deep onto orange and yellow sands.

The service trenches that connected the houses to their respective soakaways were 0.60m wide and 1.00m deep. The trenches showed topsoil onto orange and yellow sands.

Finds

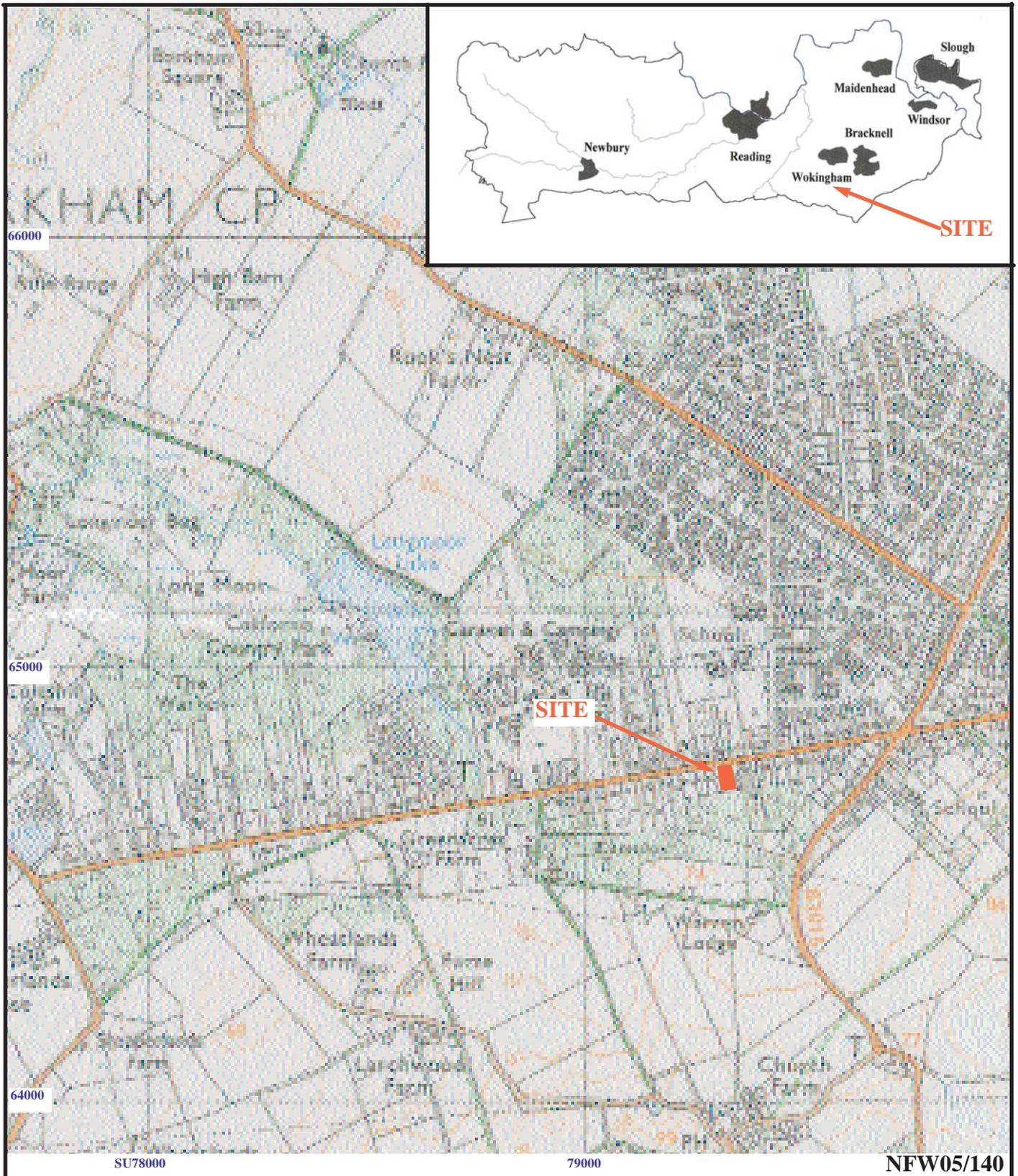
No finds of archaeological interest were noted and modern detritus was not retained

Conclusion

No finds nor deposits of any archaeological interest were observed during this fieldwork.

References

- BA, 2005, 'Land at 160 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief', Berkshire Archaeology, Reading
- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap **1**, Reading
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO



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Figure 1. Location of site within Finchampstead and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site on Nine Mile Ride.

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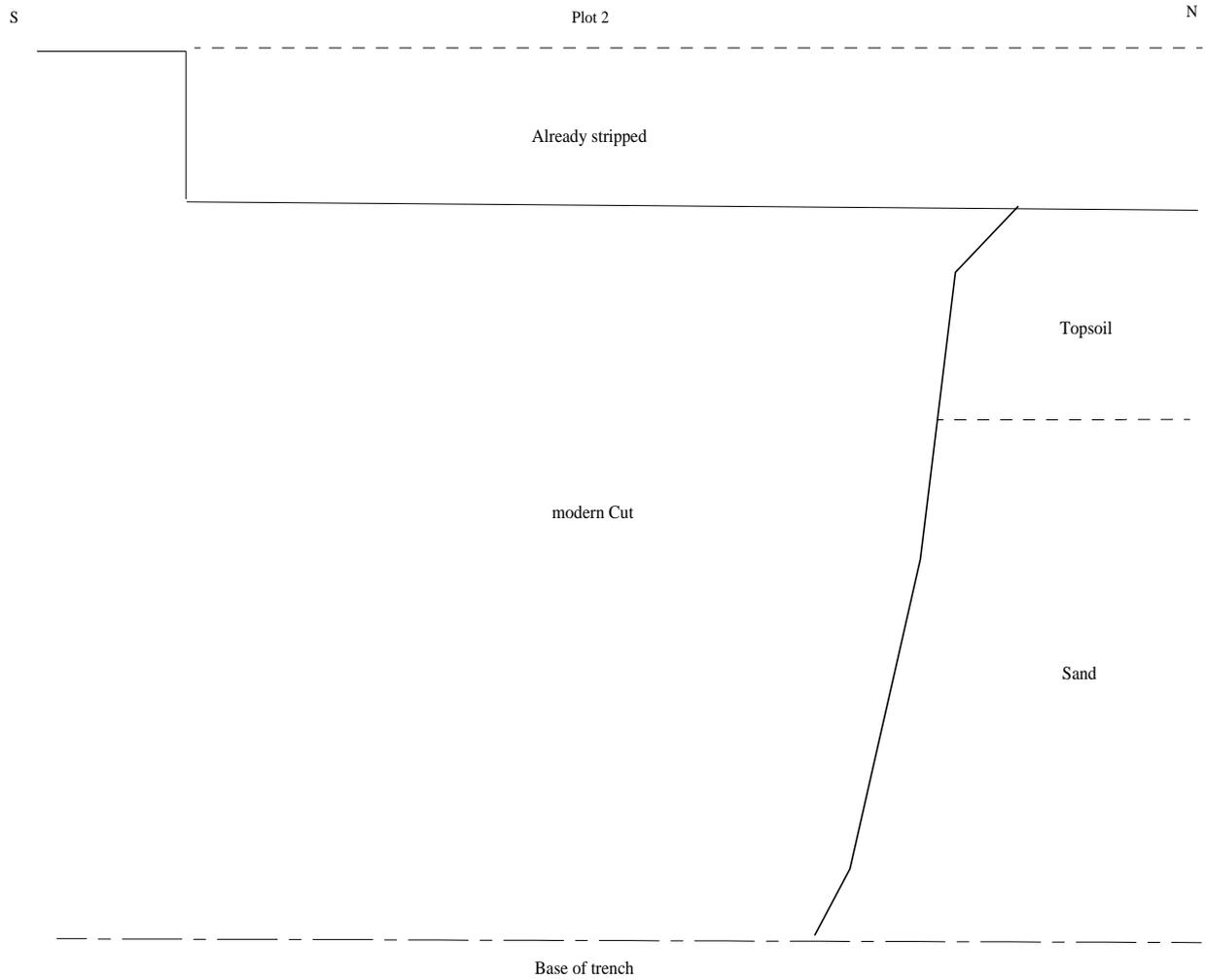


Figure 3. Representative section