

# **Snelshall East, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire**

## **An Archaeological Metal Detector Survey and Watching Brief for English Partnerships**

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SEMK02/55

**September 2002**

## Summary

**Site name:** Snelshall East, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

**Grid reference:** SP8355 3333

**Site activity:** Metal detector survey and Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 26th August – 11th September 2002

**Project manager:** Erlend Hindmarch

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Mundin

**Site code:** SEMK 02/55

**Area of site:** -

**Summary of results:** No archaeological finds or deposits were recorded.

**Monuments identified:** None

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum Service in due course. The accession code is AYBCM:2002.85

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	Steve Preston ✓ 20.09.02

# **Snelshall East, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire An Archaeological Metal Detector Survey and Watching Brief**

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**Report 02/55**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological metal detector survey and watching brief carried out at Snelshall East, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire (SP 8355 3333) (Fig.1). The work was commissioned by Ruth McCarthy of English Partnerships, Central Business Exchange, 414-428 Midsummer Boulevard, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 2EA.

The site is within the control of English Partnerships, who have planning authority under Section 7 (1) of the New Towns Act 1981 and the Town and County Planning (New Towns) Special Development (Amended) Order 1985. Advance infrastructure is planned to construct the grid roads at this future housing development. The infrastructure works are subject to a requirement for the implementation of a programme of archaeological work during the groundworks.

This requirement has regard to the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Commission's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Brian Giggins, Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin and Sarah Coles between 29th August and 11th September 2002. The metal detector survey was carried out by Andrew Muddin on 28th August 2002. The site code is SEMK 02/55. The archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum Service in due course. The accession code is AYBCM:2002.85

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the southern edge of Milton Keynes (Fig. 1), on land north of the Tattenhoe roundabout just off the V1 (Snelshall Road) and the H8 (Standing Way) (Fig. 3). The site lies on a gentle north-facing slope at a height of between 100m and 106m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 1992) the underlying geology is glacial till above Oxford Clay, which was observed on site.

## **Archaeological background**

The site is located to the south of the deserted medieval village of Tattenhoe and a Medieval fishpond, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Fig. 2). Evaluations to the eastern side of the V1 road uncovered minor medieval activity (Taylor 2001). To the north of the site, in Westcroft, two areas of Iron Age activity have been investigated. Rescue work in 1993 uncovered a large nucleated pit group and outlying features, mostly of middle Iron Age date, but including finds from the late Neolithic to Medieval periods (Ford 2000). Earlier this year, a late Iron Age enclosure was investigated at Westcroft as part of a watching brief during similar groundworks (Anthony 2002 and forthcoming).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The metal detector survey took place prior to the commencement of invasive groundworks. The purpose of the survey was to obtain dating evidence by systematically traversing the area that was to be stripped, scanning at an interval of 10m, revisiting 'hot spots', if any, in greater detail. The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the construction of the roads. All topsoil stripping would be observed for features, and spoilheaps monitored for finds.

## **Results**

All of the topsoil stripping was carried out by bulldozer, which limited the view of the subsoil and the surface of the natural geology. The topsoil that was removed covered the site to a depth of 0.4m. The topsoil contained disturbance from patches of hardcore, obviously from previous building of access paths across the site. In the area where a drainage channel had been dug along the hedge line (Fig. 3), a piece of late post-medieval pottery was found (not retained). As Road 1 (Fig. 3) progressed it was noted that the only finds were coming from the topsoil. During this stripping, modern brick and occasional pottery sherds were the only finds (not retained). At approximately 300m from the compound along Road 1, a patch of modern brick rubble was observed, matching a crop mark that could be seen from ground level. This crossed the field from south-west to north-east (Fig. 3). This is thought to represent the position of an access road used in 1999.

No archaeology was observed during the stripping for Road 2 (Fig. 3). Parts of the drainage channels for the sewers were observed in section, but again no archaeology was seen in section (Fig. 3). Observation of these deep sections was difficult due to shoring and the depth of the trench, which was 4m to 4.5m deep.

An area stripped of topsoil for the site compound located on the west-side of the site was also subject to metal detecting and watching without result.

## **Finds**

### *Metalwork*

Four objects were found during the metal detector survey. All of these were of ferrous material, representing miscellaneous pieces of recent agricultural machinery and are not of archaeological importance. In addition iron finds such as nails and modern items such as aluminium cans were also noted. All pieces came from the topsoil and were not retained.

## **Conclusion**

No archaeological deposits were noted on the site nor any finds recovered. It needs to be noted that the stripping of the topsoil was carried out by bulldozer and not by a machine with a back actor. This rarely exposed the natural geology, which is the level at which archaeological deposits might realistically be observed.

No metalwork of archaeological interest was found during the metal detector survey.

## **References**

- Anthony, S, 2002, 'Westcroft, Phase IV, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services Report 02/12, Reading
- Anthony, S, forthcoming, 'Iron Age settlement at Westcroft, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire', *Rec Buckinghamshire*
- BGS, 1992, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000 Sheet 220, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 2000, 'An evaluation and rescue excavation at the Westcroft Distict Centre, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, 1993, *Rec Buckinghamshire* 40 (for 1998-2000), 23-34
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Taylor, K, 2001, 'Tattenhoe Phase 2b Site 33, Milton Keynes, Buckinhamshire; an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services Report 01/24, Reading

# Snellshall East, Milton Keynes

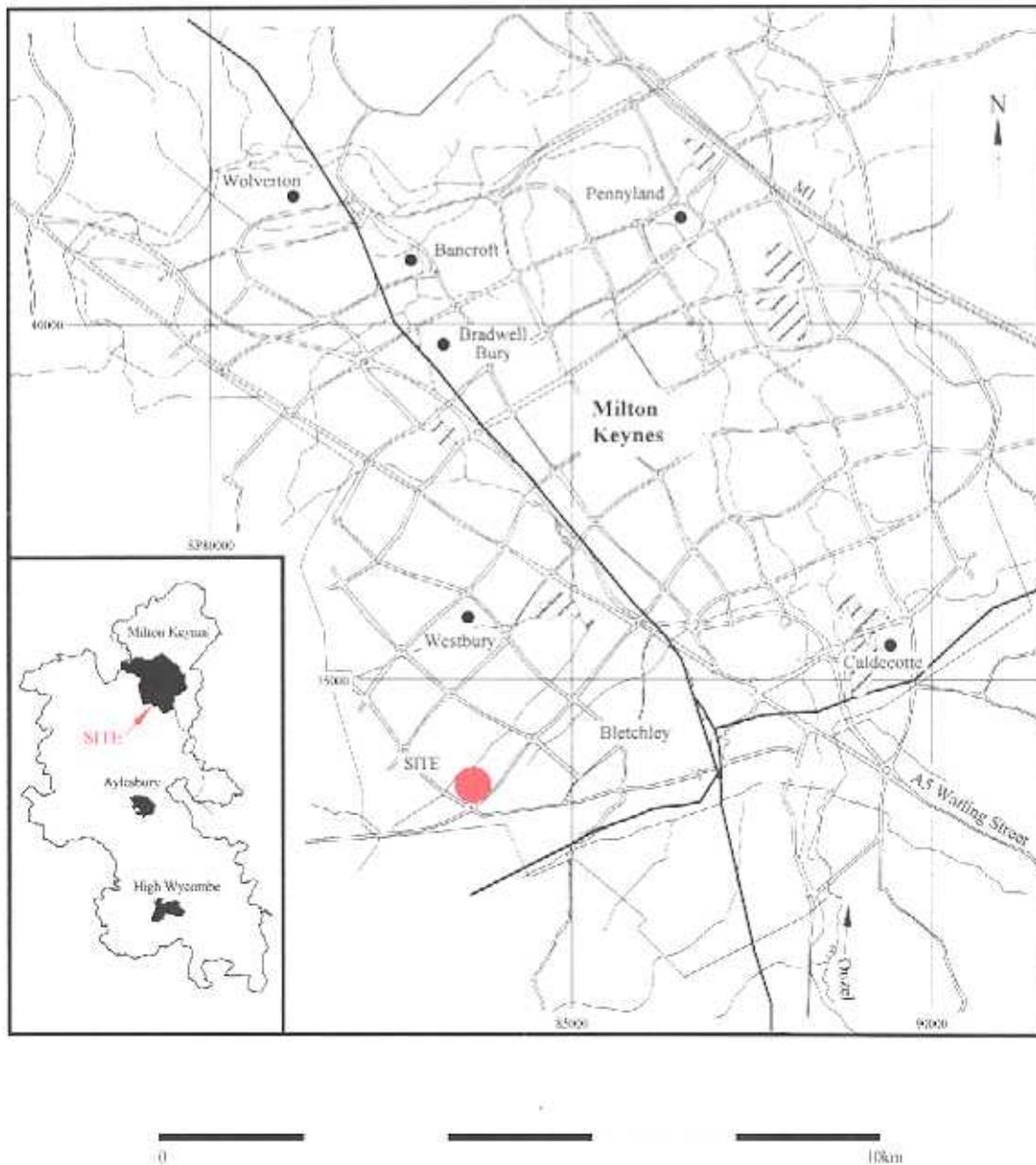
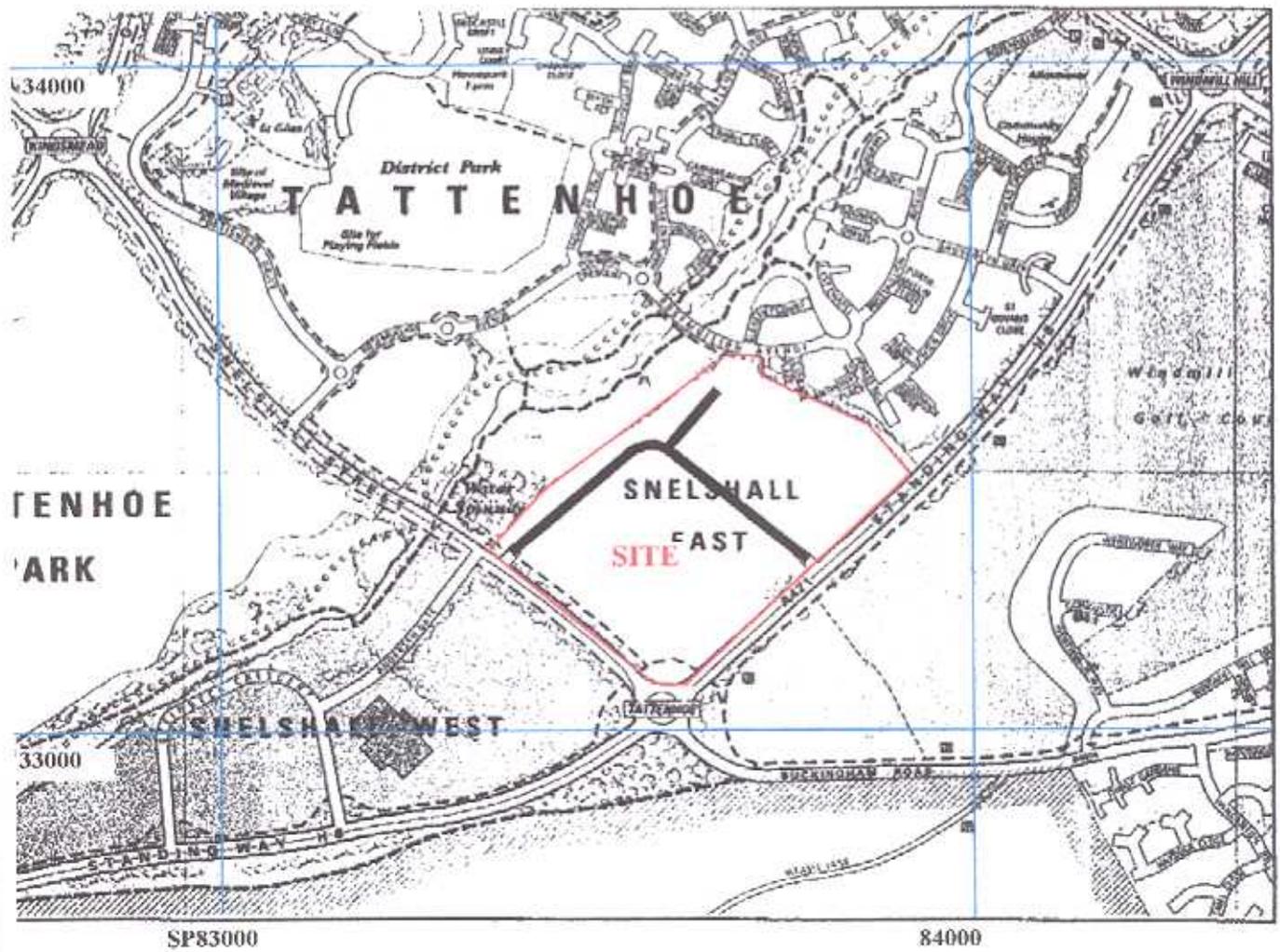


Figure 1. Location of site within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

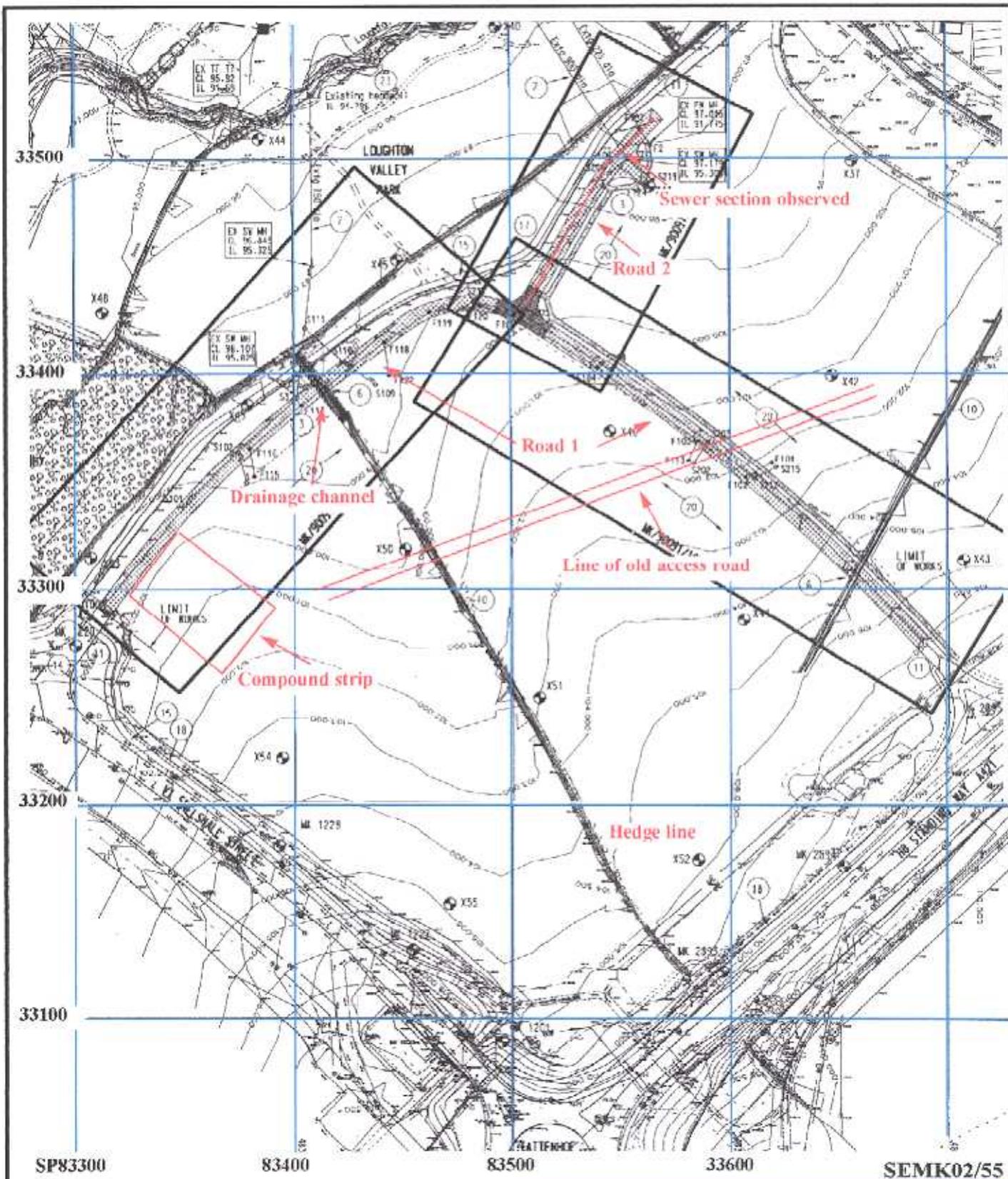


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Figure 2. Location of Snelshill East

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Figure 3. Areas examined in watching brief.

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