

5 Avonbank Drive, Luddington, Old Stratford and Draycote, Warwickshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



understanding heritage matters

Report No 1114
July 2011



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: 5 Avonbank Drive, Luddington,
Old Stratford and Draycote,
Warwickshire

Commissioned by: Mr Colin Ombler

Project Report No. 1114

Site Code: OA11

NGR: SP 1818 5335.

Planning Reference: 08/0323/FUL

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief during the construction of a new house and attached garage for Mr Colin Ombler only recorded layers of natural geology. No archaeological remains were revealed and no finds or features associated with the archaeological sites known to exist to the north of the site were recovered.

1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-upon-Avon District Council for a new dwelling and garage, with access, at 5 Avonbank Drive, Luddington, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. The site lies on a gravel terrace alongside the River Avon, a location well-endowed with evidence for settlement in the prehistoric and Roman periods. A condition of planning permission required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out in conjunction with the development

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of archaeological observation of soil stripping and foundation trenches in accordance with a brief prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority (March 2010), was commissioned from Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire and carried out between May and June 2011 and this report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code OA11.

2 Location

2.1 The development site is located 50m west of the River Avon in the parish of Old Stratford and Drayton at map reference SP 1818 5335. The site was formerly occupied by a 20th century bungalow.

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is 2nd Terrace River gravel although it also lies very close to deposits of Lower Lias clay (British Geological Survey 1974).

3 Methodology

3.1 The watching brief was designed to observe any groundworks associated with the development and record as far as possible, the nature of the archaeological resource on the site.

3.2 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications. Fieldwork involved an archaeologist being present during appropriate groundworks. An absence of archaeological remains revealed by the groundworks prompted a discussion with the Planning Archaeologist to conclude the mitigation following the completion of a cross section of trenches and soil stripping.

4 Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 A number of sites are known within the vicinity of the development site (Fig 1); some from scatters of finds but most from cropmarks which show on aerial photographs. The earliest of these lie to the north-west of the site, where two ring ditches (Warwickshire Museum Historic Environment Record Number MWA 6310) probably represent the ploughed out remains of Neolithic or Bronze Age barrows or ring-ditches.

4.2 Several Roman finds have been found close to the site including fragments of pottery and three Roman coins (HER MWA919) probably from a much larger settlement area indicated by scatters of pottery (HER MWA 1154). An undated linear feature showing as a cropmark (HER MWA 1413) might easily represent a ditch associated with this or even earlier occupation.

4.3 On the south side of the River Avon, human bone was found during the construction of the sewage works (HER MWA 1289). This is likely to represent evidence for a cemetery and is probably Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon in date.

4.4 The present site lies within an area of residential properties which lies to the west of Stratford-upon-Avon and to the east of Luddington. It was under the plough in the 19th century (Ordnance Survey 1834 and 1887; Fig 5) whilst the present estate has all been built after 1938 (Ordnance Survey 1938).

5 Watching Brief

5.1 The former bungalow on the site was demolished prior to site being visited. The new footprint (Fig 2) was partially stripped of up to 0.3m of topsoil whilst only the eastern, southern and northern foundation trenches for the new building were observed.

5.2 The foundation trenches were all over 1m deep and dug into 0.55m of geological natural deposits: firm sand and gravel (3) or dark grey clay (2), both overlain by 0.4m of brownish yellow sand and gravel (4) (Figs 3 and 4);

5.3 The natural was covered by only 0.2m of brown sandy loam soil (1) except for the northern end of the site where the soil stripping removed 0.3m.

5.4 No archaeological finds or features were found during the work.

5.5 Agreement was reached with the County Planning Archaeologist that no further work was necessary.

6 Conclusions

6.1 No archaeological deposits were found during the observation of the groundworks. The geological deposit sequence appeared to relate to river terrace gravels or other alluvial activity, but no discernible pattern was identified.

Acknowledgements

Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire would like to thank Mr Colin Ombler for commissioning the work and the County Planning Archaeologist for preparing the brief. Thanks must also go to the contractor, Mr Richard Johnson, who was very helpful on site.

Bibliography

British Geological Survey 1974 Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), Solid and Drift Geology, Stratford-upon-Avon Sheet 200

Ordnance Survey 1834 *First Edition one inch to one mile map*, Sheet 51, Worcester

Ordnance Survey 1887 *First Edition 1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 44.9

Ordnance Survey 1905 *Second Edition 1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 44.9

Ordnance Survey 1938 *Revised Edition 1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 44.9

Appendix List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	Topsoil layer	
2	Dark grey clay	Natural geology
3	Yellowish brown sand and gravel	Natural geology
4	Brownish yellow sand and gravel	Natural geology

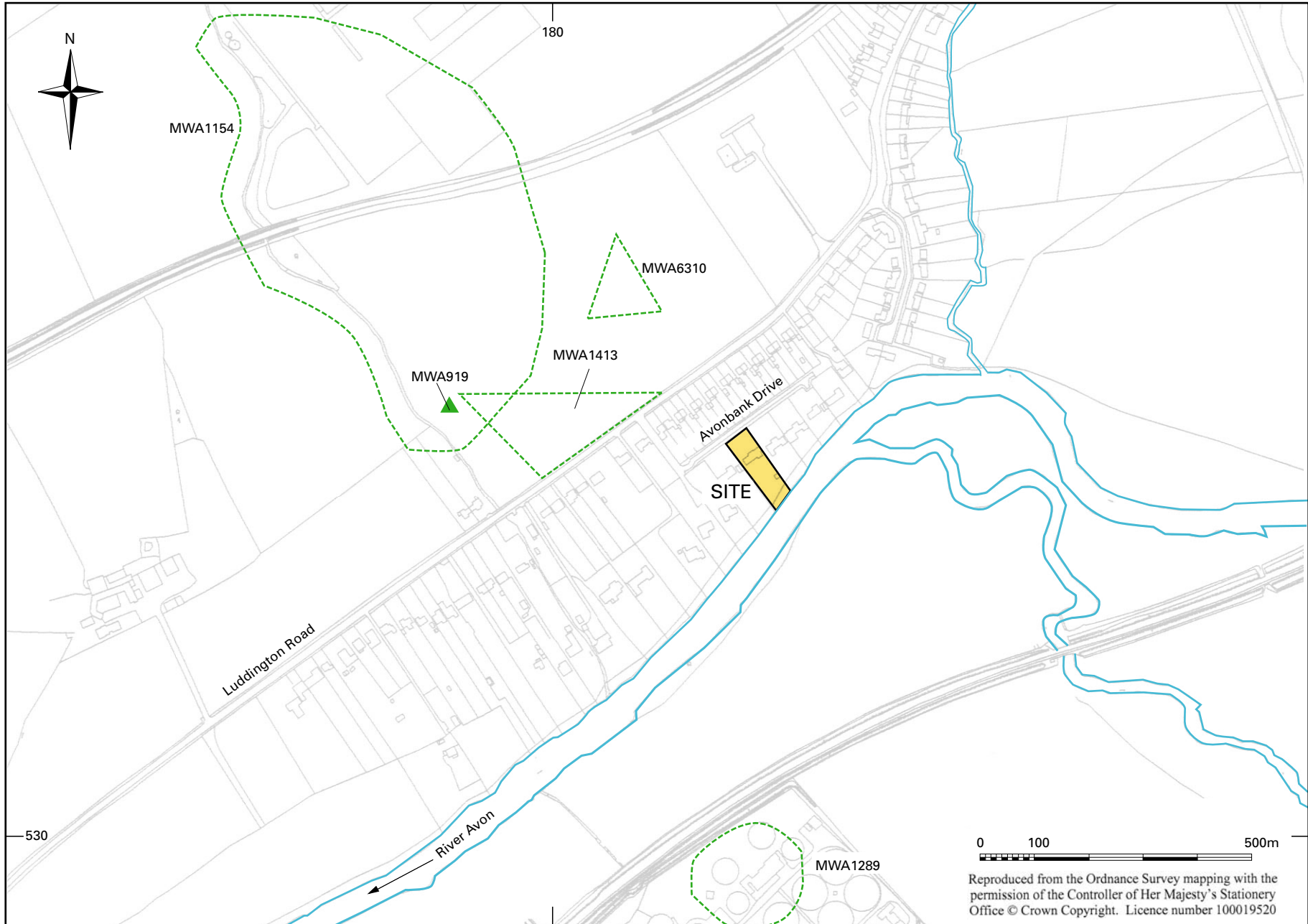


Fig 1: Site location



Fig 2: Area and trenches observed



Fig 3: View of site looking north-west, showing typical foundation trench with layers of geological natural



Fig 4: General view of site looking north

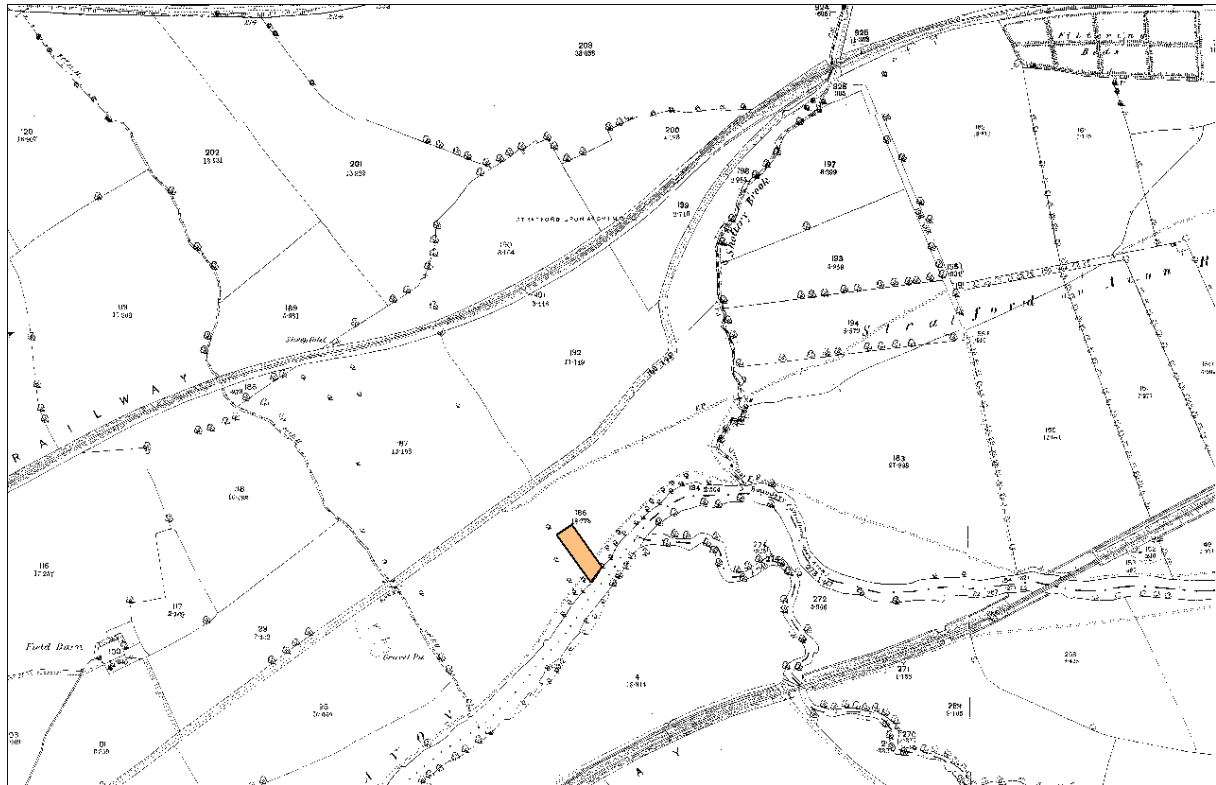


Fig 5: Location of site on First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887