



**Archaeological strip, map and sample
on land at Two Hides Farm
Long Buckby Road, Watford
Northamptonshire
May 2016**

Report No. 16/106

Author and illustrator: Paul Clements



© MOLA Northampton
Project Manager: Anthony Maull
Site Code: ENN107942
NGR: SP 6073 6871

MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN 01604 809800
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk

**Archaeological strip, map and sample
on land at Two Hides Farm
Long Buckby Road, Watford
Northamptonshire
May 2016**

ENN107942

Report No. 16/106

Quality control and sign off:

Issue No.	Date approved:	Checked by:	Verified by:	Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	22.06.16	P Chapman		A Chapman	Draft for client review

Author and illustrator: Paul Clements

© MOLA Northampton 2016

MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 809 800
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk

*MOLA Northampton is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales
with company registration number 8727508 and charity registration number 1155198.
Registered office: Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED.*

STAFF

Project Manager: Anthony Maull Cert Arch
Text and illustrations Paul Clements BA
Fieldwork Tim Sharman BA
Paul Clements
Ben Kidd BA

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS molanort1-255040	
Project title	Archaeological strip, map and sample on land at Two Hides Farm, Long Buckby Road, Watford, Northamptonshire, May 2016		
Short description	In May 2016 a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, and analysis (strip, map, and sample) was carried out by MOLA Northampton for GSS Architecture, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Gilbert. The works identified remnant furrows of medieval to post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.		
Project type	Archaeological strip, map and sample.		
Previous work			
Current land use	Pasture		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Medieval to post-medieval furrows		
Significant finds			
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Two Hides Farm, Watford		
Easting Northing	SP 6073 6871		
Area (sq m/ha)	0.25 ha		
Height aOD	c 130m AOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Tim Sharman and Paul Clements		
Project Managers	Anthony Maul		
Sponsor or funding body	GSS Architecture		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	25/05/2016		
End date	02/06/2016		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	ENN107942		
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Title	Archaeological strip, map and sample on land at Two Hides Farm, Long Buckby Road, Watford, Northamptonshire, May 2016		
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton Report 16/106		
Author(s)	Paul Clements		
Page numbers	7 pages of text and figures		
Date	June 2016		

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	BACKGROUND	3
	2.1 Location and geology	3
	2.2 Historical and archaeological background	3
3	METHODOLOGY	5
4	THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE	5
5	DISCUSSION	6
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	7

Figures

Front cover: General view facing north-west.

Fig 1: Site location 1:1,500

Fig 2: Trench section, looking south

Fig 3: Building plot fully excavated, looking south-east

Archaeological strip, map and sample on land at Two Hides Farm Long Buckby Road, Watford Northamptonshire May 2016

Abstract

In May 2016 a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording, and analysis (strip, map, and sample) was carried out by MOLA Northampton for GSS Architecture, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Gilbert. The works identified remnant furrows of medieval to post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.

1 INTRODUCTION

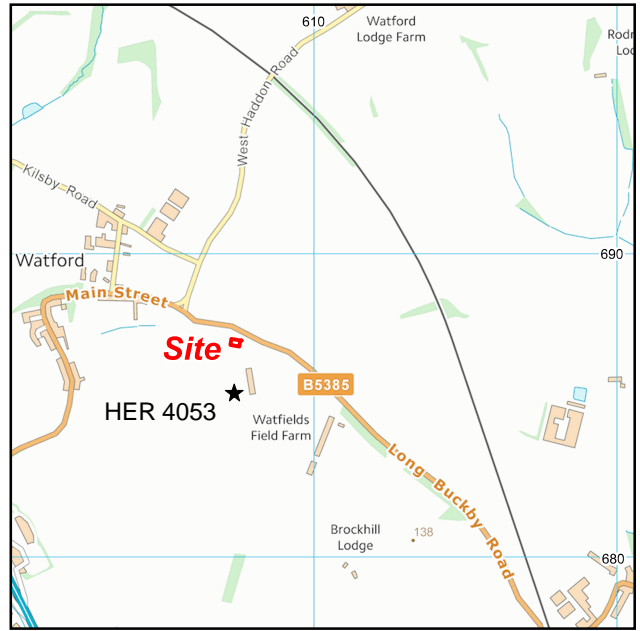
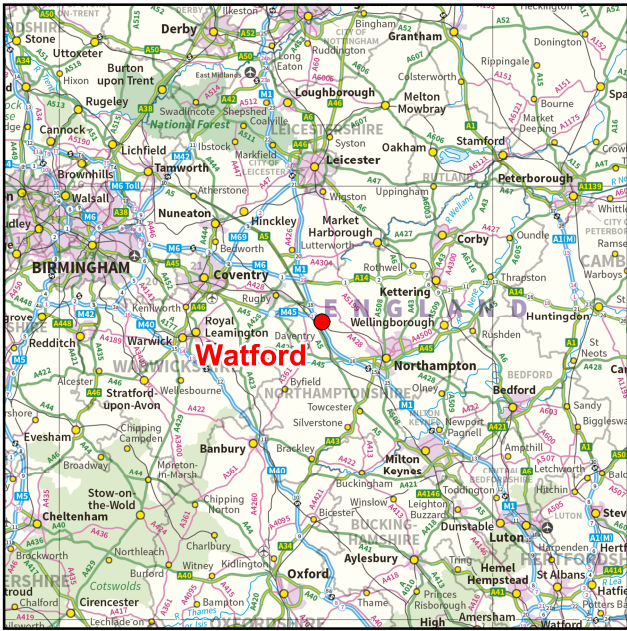
A programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis (strip, map, and sample) was undertaken by MOLA Northampton in May 2016 on land at Two Hides Farm, Watford, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 60734 68714; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by CSS Architecture on behalf of their clients Mr and Mrs Gilbert. The work was undertaken in advance of construction of a single detached dwelling off an existing driveway (Planning Ref: DA/2014/1105).

The scope of works was outlined and detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MOLA Northampton (2016).

The main objectives of the works were to:

- Mitigate the impact of the development through preservation by record;
- establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;
- establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.

Specific research objectives will be drawn from national and regional research frameworks as relevant depending upon the results of the work (EH 1991a and 1997; Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012).



Scale 1:1,500

Site location and identified features Fig 1

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

The development site is situated to the south-east of the village of Watford, to the south of Long Buckby Road (Fig 1). It lies in a narrow strip of grassland which forms the northern border of a long field, currently used for animal grazing. The site is bounded to the north by the driveway leading from the main road. Beyond this, and to the west is a temporary mobile home, currently used as agricultural workers' residence, and storage containers. To the east, the area is edged by grassland, and a roadway leading to chicken sheds, situated about 100m to the south-south-east. The development area lies c130m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

The site is underlain by siltstone and mudstone of the Dyrham formation (BGS 2016).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The historical background was considered as part of the Written scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2015) and is reproduced here.

No known designated heritage assets are to be found within the proposed development area, and no archaeological works are known to have taken place. However, the village of Watford has a concentration of archaeological and historical sites.

Prehistoric

While prehistoric evidence in the area is not abundant, some records should be noted. Between 800m and 1km to the east of the development site, are several areas where unstratified prehistoric flints have been recovered. In the same area, unstratified Bronze Age flints have also come to light. Just over 1km to the south lies a possible Bronze Age funerary site, with barrows and enclosures.

Trial trench evaluation to the south of the development area located Iron Age activity comprising a possible Iron Age enclosure, as well as undated ditches and pits (Parker 2013; HER 4053; Fig 1).

Further undated, but probably prehistoric, cropmarks are known around 840m to the south-east of the site and c700m to the south, where rectangular enclosures and linear features have been identified (HER 971).

Romano-British

Little recorded Romano-British activity seems to have taken place in the vicinity of the site, although Roman settlement is known further north in the parish (RCHME 1981, 189), and it is likely that the lack of evidence is due to the absence of previous intervention. Only one possible area of activity from this period has been identified just over 1km to the south-south-west of the site is a small area of possible Romano-British agricultural activity.

Saxon and medieval

Watford and the surrounding deserted medieval villages are recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086 as a manor settlement, of two hides, and a population of 27 (RCHME 1981). A number of earthworks are preserved to the south, east and clustered to the west of Watford village, representing the remains of the shrunken medieval settlement of Watford. Outlying toft habitation enclosures and hollow-ways can be found to the south and east of the village, the nearest earthworks lie less than 300m to the north-west of the development site. The main area of earthworks lies to the west of the village, protected as a Scheduled Monument (SM 35644). The remains in this area

include probable ponds, building mounds, enclosures, boundaries, hollow-ways and terraces, as well as field boundaries and cultivation strips. The northern area was almost certainly abandoned by 1740, although houses in the southern area of earthworks may have still stood until as late as the mid-19th century (RCHME 1981, 191).

Ridge and furrow earthworks in excellent condition can be seen through aerial photography to the north and south of the village. In the area of the proposed development they are much fainter, but are still visible on a north-east to south-west alignment in the main pasture field, and in the small field directly to the west of the site. This area was still open field with ridge and furrow in 1770 (Partida, Hall and Foard 1993, atlas p42).

Long Buckby Road which passes close to the development site is the route of the historic Coventry to Peterborough Road.

Post-medieval and modern

By the 18th century, Watford village had grown to contain 35 houses (RCHME 1981). In the centre of Watford is the location of the former Watford Court, which probably developed from a 16th-century house built by Richard Burnaby (952/2/1). It was enlarged in the 17th and 19th centuries, and during the 18th century, was given a large area of gardens, Watford Park (HER 962) to the west, incorporating much of the shrunken medieval village (SM 35644). This garden contained a number of features, including probable water features (962/0/11), woodlands (962/0/22), ornamental canals (962/0/6), and an east-west tree-lined avenue (962/0/1) and, by the 19th century, also a ha-ha (952/2/9), shrubberies (952/2/10), and two further avenues of trees, leading north and north-east (HER 962/0/2, 962/0/10). Watford Court was demolished in the 1970s.

Other post-medieval features can be found in the landscape around the site. Brockhill Lodge, a possible post-medieval or modern farm can be found c800m to the east of the site (HER 7996, 7996/1, 7996/1/1/, 7996/1/2). A possible post-medieval drain lies c1km to the west (952).

A number of Grade I and II listed buildings are to be found in the centre of Watford village, including the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul and historic walls (6/273, 6/279, 6/277, 6/296, 6/278), the gate-piers and walls of the entranceway to the former Watford Court (6/287, 6/288) and Watford Court Coach House (6/279).

Ridge and furrow earthworks were still extant in the development area until at least 1945, when aerial photographs show a different alignment of field boundaries, with a substantial hedgerow crossing just to the south of the site on a south-west by north-east alignment. This division disappeared by 2004, and the site was used as arable land until some point after 2005. A track, probably for tractor access, is known to have crossed to the south of the development area during the mid-2000s. Between 2005 and 2009, the chicken sheds, roadway, driveway, and mobile homes were installed on the site, and the large field to the south was divided off and later used for animal pasture.

The 'Jurassic Way' long distance footpath passes the site around 400m to the east. Further afield, the M1 motorway and associated services at Watford Gap are located 1km to the south-west of the site.

3 METHODOLOGY

A 2 ton tracked mini-mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.90m wide toothless ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The development area was cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of potential archaeological features. Recording followed standard MOLA Northampton procedures as described in the Fieldwork Manual (MOLA 2014). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. Photography was with 35mm black and white film and digital images.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014c) and *Standard and Guidance: archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

General stratigraphy

The underlying geology was encountered at 0.40-0.50m below the modern ground surface. It comprised light yellow-brown sandy-clay containing occasional small angular pieces of ironstone. The subsoil, 0.20m thick, was dark orange-brown sandy-clay-loam. Several post-medieval finds including small pottery sherds and fragments of clay tobacco-pipe were recovered from the subsoil, but not retained. The topsoil was 0.30m thick, dark grey-brown sandy-clay.



Trench section, looking south Fig 2

Furrows, 2m wide, were identified across the excavated area 4-5m apart (Figs 1 and 3). Aligned north-east to south-west they correspond with furrows identified on aerial photography



Building plot fully excavated showing furrows, looking south-east Fig 3

5 DISCUSSION

The evaluation has identified four truncated furrows of medieval to post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation indicating that the development area lay within the medieval open field system surrounding Watford during this time. No residual finds predating the post-medieval period were recovered from the topsoil or subsoil suggesting that the area has primarily remained undisturbed until its utilisation for ridge and furrow cultivation during the medieval to post-medieval periods.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ClfA 2014a *Standard and guidance: archaeological watching brief*, Chartered Institute of Archaeologists
- ClfA 2014b *Standards and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
- ClfA 2014c *Code of Conduct*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
- DCLG 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department for Communities and Local Government
- EH 1991 *Management of archaeological projects, second edition (MAP2)*, English Heritage
- EH 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers Guide*, English Heritage
- Knight, D, Vyner, B, and Allen, C, 2012 *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands*, Nottingham Archaeology Monographs, **6**
- MOLA 2014 *Archaeological fieldwork manual*, MOLA Northampton
- MOLA 2015 *Written scheme of investigation for a archaeological strip, map and sample at Two Hides Farm, Long Buckby Road, Watford, Northamptonshire*, MOLA Northampton
- Parker, R, 2013, *Two Hides Farm, Watford, Northamptonshire: Report on an Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation*
- Partida, T, Hall, D H, and Foard, G, 2013 *An Atlas of Northamptonshire: The Medieval and Early-Modern Landscape*, Oxbow Books
- RCHME 1981 *An inventory of the historical monuments in the County of Northampton Vol. 3: An inventory of the archaeological sites in north-west Northamptonshire*, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments England

Websites

- BGS 2016 <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geindex/home.html> British Geological Survey website



MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 809 800
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk