



making sense of heritage

Montem Academy Slough, Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Slough Borough Council Planning Ref: P/04247/021
Ref: 112000.03
February 2016



**Montem Academy
Slough, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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**WA Reference: 112000.03
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Montem Academy Slough, Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Contents

Summary	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
1 INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1 Project background	5
1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology.....	5
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Recent investigations in the area.....	6
3 METHODOLOGY.....	6
3.1 Aims and objectives	6
3.2 Fieldwork methodology	7
3.3 Recording.....	7
4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS.....	7
4.1 Natural soil sequence.....	7
4.2 Summary.....	8
5 ARTEFACTS	8
6 ENVIRONMENTAL	8
7 DISCUSSION.....	8
8 STORAGE AND CURATION	8
8.1 Museum	8
8.2 Preparation of the Archive	8
8.3 Discard Policy	8
8.4 Security Copy.....	8
9 REFERENCES.....	9
10 APPENDICES.....	10
10.1 Appendix 1: OASIS form	10



Figures

Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Plates

Plate 1: Working shot, view from north-east

Plate 2: Working shot, view from south-west

Plate 3: Representative section, view from west

Plate 4: Area of modern disturbance, south-east corner of site



Montem Academy Slough, Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Agripower Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief in association with the development of a new polymetric Multi-Use Game Area (MUGA) on the existing playing field of the Montem Academy, Chalvey Grove, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2TE (centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 495850 179680). The watching brief was undertaken on the 16 and 17 February 2016.

The proposed MUGA covers an area of c. 0.15 ha, and involved the removal of topsoil and some subsoil which may have had an impact on archaeological remains. The objective of the watching brief was to monitor this excavation and preserve in record any archaeological features that were found.

The watching brief monitored the removal of deposits by machine to the construction level of 0.25m below present ground level, a depth not deep enough to penetrate the subsoil and so disturb any potential archaeological remains. The works, therefore, could not confirm the presence of archaeological features or deposits although such a shallow construction level would not disturb or impact on any present.



Montem Academy Slough, Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Agripower Ltd for commissioning the work, in particular their Projects Manager, Mark Swatton. Thanks are also due to Roland Smith of Berkshire Archaeology, who monitored the project on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

The watching brief was undertaken by Jamie McCarthy who also compiled this report. The illustrations were prepared by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Gareth Chaffey.

Montem Academy Slough, Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) has been commissioned by Agripower Ltd (the 'Client') to carry out an archaeological watching brief in association with the development of a new polymetric Multi-Use Game Area (MUGA) on the existing playing field of the Montem Academy, Chalvey Grove, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2TE (centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 495850 1796800) (Figure 1).

1.1.2 A planning application for the new MUGA within the previously undeveloped playing fields of the Academy has been submitted to Slough Borough Council (SBC) (application number P/04247/021). The proposed MUGA covers an area of, c. 0.15 ha, and involves the removal of topsoil and subsoil which may impact on archaeological remains. The requirement for a programme of archaeological monitoring via watching brief was identified as a condition of the planning consent by Roland Smith, Berkshire Archaeology, acting on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The condition stated:

No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.

Reason:

The site is within an area of archaeological potential. A programme of works is required to mitigate the impact of development and to record any surviving remains so as to advance our understanding of their significance in accordance with national and local plan policy.

1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the watching brief was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and submitted to, and approved by, Roland Smith of Berkshire Archaeology and Agripower Ltd, prior to the start of fieldwork (WA 2016). The WSI complied with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists

1.1.4 This document presents the results of the archaeological watching brief which took place on the 16 and 17 February 2016.

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

1.2.1 Montem Academy is located on the southern edge of Slough, to the north of Telford Drive and Tyndale Mews. The Site is bordered by residential properties to the south and west and allotments to the north-west adjacent to the existing Academy buildings. The Site is located to the west of the Academy, occupying the north-eastern corner of the playing field, and measures 1369 m² (37 m x 37 m) (Figure 1).

- 1.2.2 The Site lies at approximately 26.5 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology is mapped as clay, silt and sand of the Lambeth Group (British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer; <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>; Accessed on 07/01/2016).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Site is situated in an area of high archaeological potential. The gravel terraces of the River Thames have revealed a wealth of archaeological information about the evolution of the landscape of the region, the development of settlement patterns and past human occupation. Much of this has come to light in the course of gravel quarrying, which has been so extensive that the Thames Valley has provided one of the richest resources of archaeological data in the country. Previous archaeological work has identified activity ranging from the Mesolithic up to the medieval period as being present in the Study Area.
- 2.1.2 Further detail on the archaeological and historical significance of the area can be found in the previous WSI (WA 2016).

2.2 Recent investigations in the area

- 2.2.1 There have been a number of recorded excavations carried out in the vicinity of the Site in the past 20 years (ADS – NMR excavation index). A selection of these surveys is discussed below but a more exhaustive list is available on the Archaeology Data Service website (ADS).
- 2.2.2 Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS) excavated a site at Cippenham Sector approximately 550 m north of the Site in 1996. The work uncovered early and late Neolithic pits, Early and Middle Bronze Age cremations and pits and enclosures dating to both the Iron Age and the Romano British period (TVAS 1996).
- 2.2.3 Berkshire Archaeology Services carried out a watching brief some 200 m south of the Site in 2004 for the existing sewage treatment plant and recorded a possible palaeochannel (Berkshire Archaeology Services 2004).
- 2.2.4 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in Cippenham by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) in 1994. A Bronze Age ring ditch, several Iron Age ditches, and a small amount of Roman pottery were recorded (OAU 1994).
- 2.2.5 An archaeological evaluation comprising of eight trenches was carried out during the development of the nearby Asda Superstore (WA 1987), some 540 m to the north-west of the Site. The evaluation recorded evidence of prehistoric and Romano-British activity.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The WSI (WA 2016) set out the agreed aims of the project and the methods by which these aims would be achieved, in line with current ClfA guidelines outlined in *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a).
- 3.1.2 The aims and objectives of an archaeological watching brief are:
- *to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established*

with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works; including

- to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;*
- to confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;*
- to determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;*
- to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains; and*
- to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.*
- to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and*
- to prepare a report on the results of the watching brief.*

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 The watching brief monitored the groundworks to determine whether any features of archaeological interest would be impacted by the construction work.

3.2.2 The topsoil and some of the subsoil were removed by machine to the construction level of 0.25 m below current ground level (Plates 1 and 2). This was monitored for the duration by an experienced archaeologist.

3.3 Recording

3.3.1 A full photographic record was maintained using a digital camera equipped with an image sensor of no less than 10 megapixels. This was done to illustrate the methodology of the groundworks and to provide visual evidence that there is no archaeology being impacted by the construction work. Digital images will be subject to managed quality control and curation processes which will embed appropriate metadata within the image and ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

3.3.2 The full area of the Site, as well as a series of levels taken across the stripped area, were surveyed using a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30 mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.

3.3.3 The nature of the visible topsoil and subsoil was recorded using WA's pro forma recording system, with both deposits being assigned a unique context number.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Natural soil sequence

4.1.1 The topsoil consisted of a mid-greyish brown coloured clay loam. This contained no coarse components and measured at 0.23 m in depth (Plate 3).

4.1.2 The subsoil consisted of a mid-yellowish brown coloured clay loam. Within it were rare traces of sub rounded gravel and chalk (20-60 mm in size). The full thickness of the subsoil is unknown.

4.2 Summary

- 4.2.1 During the excavation it became apparent that the construction level was not deep enough to penetrate the full depth of the subsoil and therefore disturb any potential archaeological features or deposits.
- 4.2.2 In the south-east corner of Site evidence of modern disturbance was uncovered (Plate 4). This was in the form of redeposited natural geology, possibly relating to the construction of the near-by children's play area. The presence of tarmacadam within this redeposited material confirmed that it related to modern activity.

5 ARTEFACTS

- 5.1.1 No artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL

- 6.1.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1.1 Due to the shallow depth of the works, this project cannot confirm the presence or absence of archaeological features or deposits at the Site.

8 STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

- 8.1.1 There is currently no recommendation for the deposition of the archive within a Museum.

8.2 Preparation of the Archive

- 8.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the WA project code 112000, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

- *1 file of paper records*

8.3 Discard Policy

- 8.3.1 WA follows the guidelines set out in Selection, Retention and Dispersal (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.
- 8.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2011).

8.4 Security Copy

- 8.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital

preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

- 8.4.2 The digital records will be submitted to the HER, with a copy retained in the WA security-copied and backed-up digital archive storage facility, under its designated WA project code 112000.

9 REFERENCES

- ADS 2013, Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice
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- Brown, D.H., 2011, Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation, Archaeological Archives Forum (revised edition)
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 2014a, Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief.
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- OAU, 1994 Cippenham, Slough, Berkshire: archaeological evaluation report (Part 2). Oxford Archaeological Unit [archaeological excavation and assessment reports].
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- Wessex Archaeology, 1987. Asda Superstore, Slough, Berkshire, unpublished client report, project code 31412
- Wessex Archaeology 2016, Montem Academy, Slough, Berkshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief. WA unpublished client report ref 112000.01



10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix 1: OASIS form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-243044

Project details

Project name	Montem Academy Slough, Berkshire
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Agripower Ltd. to carry out an archaeological watching brief in association with the development of a new polymetric Multi-Use Game Area (MUGA) on the existing playing field of the Montem Academy, Chalvey Grove, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2TE centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 495850 179680. The watching brief was undertaken on the 16 and 17 February 2016. The proposed MUGA covers a reasonable area, c. 0.15 ha, and involved the removal of topsoil and some subsoil which may have had an impact on archaeological remains. The objective of the watching brief was to monitor this excavation and preserve in record any archaeological features that are found. The watching brief monitored the removal of deposits by machine to the required construction level (0.25 below present ground level). It was apparent that this construction level was not deep enough to penetrate the subsoil and so disturb any potential archaeological features. This is not to say that there are no features present, but it was confirmed that the construction works would not impact any potential archaeology.
Project dates	Start: 16-02-2016 End: 17-02-2016
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	112000 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	P/04247/021 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Monument type	NONE None
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition



Project location

Country	England
Site location	BERKSHIRE SLOUGH SLOUGH Montem Academy, Slough
Postcode	SL1 2TE
Study area	37 Square metres
Site coordinates	SU 495851 179688 50.958463632058 -1.293912293689 50 57 30 N 001 17 38 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Gareth Chaffey
Project supervisor	Jamie McCarthy
Type of sponsor/funding body	construction company
Name of sponsor/funding body	Agripower Ltd.

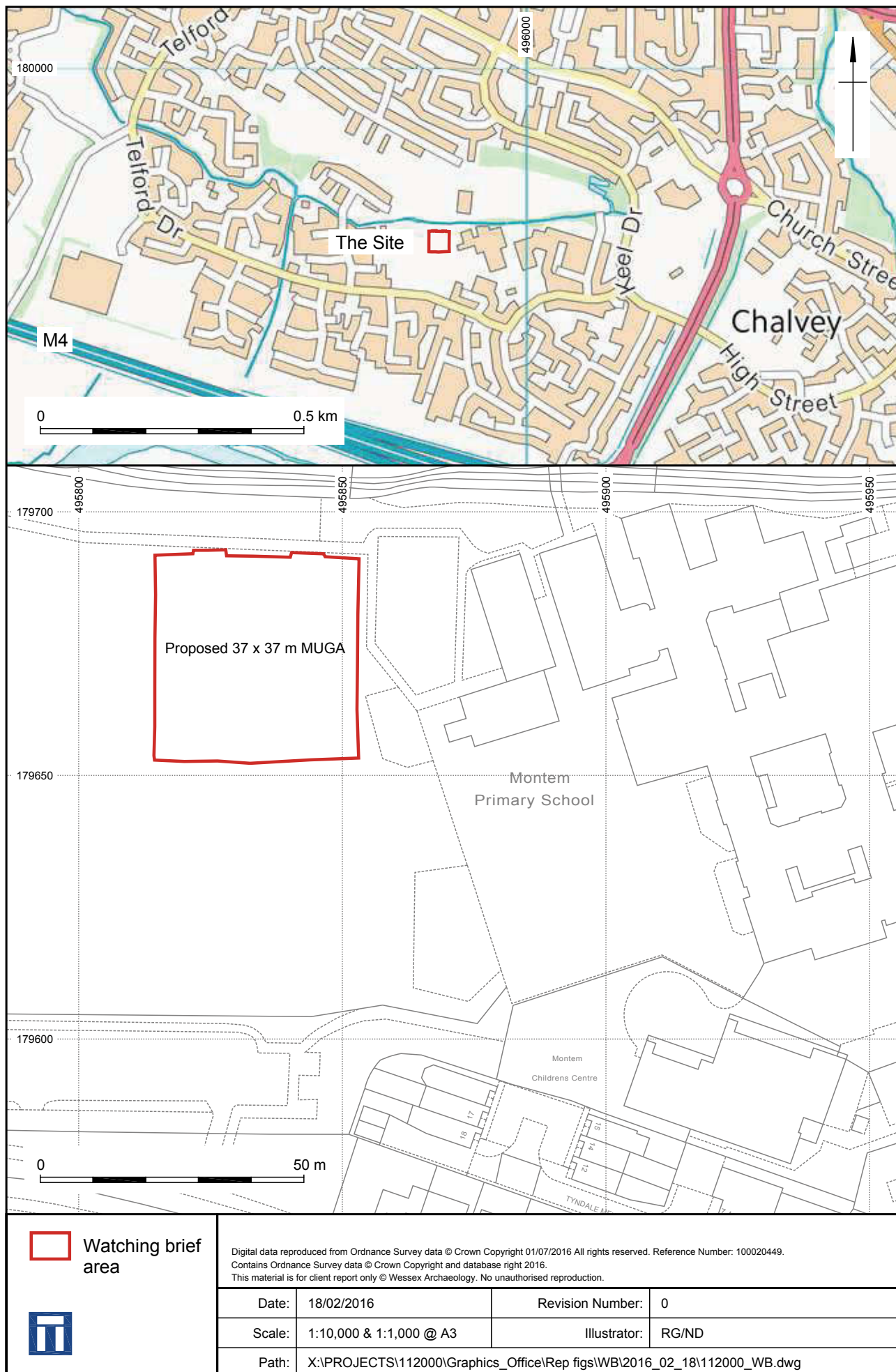
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Unknown
Digital Archive ID	112000
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Unknown
Paper Archive ID	112000
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Diary","Report"



Project
bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Montem Academy, Slough, Berkshire, Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	McCarthy, J.
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Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Working shot, view from north-east



Plate 2: Working shot, view from south-west



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Plate 3: Representative section, view from west



Plate 4: Area of modern disturbance, south-east corner of Site

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