

**THAMES PATH,  
TOWN BANKS,  
CRICKLADE,  
WILTSHIRE.**

**NGR: 410390.193773**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



September 2015  
Report No. 1082

**Quality Assurance**

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## **SUMMARY**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015 on the Thames Path, Town Banks, Cricklade, Wiltshire (NGR: 410390.193773). The archaeological works were undertaken during path resurfacing works. The project was commissioned by Cricklade Town Council.

The monitored works comprised a mechanical topsoil strip, which penetrated to a maximum depth of 0.15m below the Modern ground surface onto the top of a subsoil layer.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds were present within the monitored area.

## GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### *Archaeology*

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### *Burh*

A late Saxon fortified place. Some of these were specifically built and developed, by order of Alfred the Great, as strong points against attack by Viking raiders.

### *Medieval*

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *c.* AD 1500.

### *Natural*

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

### *NGR*

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### *OD*

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey.

### *Post-medieval*

The period from *c.* AD 1500 onwards.

### *Prehistoric*

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43. Traditionally sub divided into; *Palaeolithic* – *c.* 500,000 BC to *c.* 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – *c.* 12,000 BC to *c.* 4,500 BC; *Neolithic* – *c.* 4,500 BC to *c.* 2,000 BC; *Bronze Age* – *c.* 2,000 BC to *c.* 800 BC; *Iron Age* – *c.* 800 BC to AD 43.

### *Romano-British*

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *c.* AD 410.

### *Saxon*

The period between the end of the Roman period and the Norman Conquest.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on the Thames Path, Town Banks, Cricklade, Wiltshire (NGR: 410390.193773). The work was commissioned by Cricklade Town Council.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2015). The WSI was produced in accordance with Scheduled Monument Consent, as well as *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief.

## 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Scheduled Monument Consent (**SMC Reference Number: S00096922**) was granted for the resurfacing of the Thames Path, where runs along the northern edge of the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument known as Cricklade Town Banks (Ref: 1002997).
- 2.2 Cricklade originated as a 9<sup>th</sup> century *burh*, whose fortifications survive as a low bank in the form of a square earthwork. Four distinct elements to the fortifications have been previously identified through investigative excavation in the form of a timber-revetted clay and turf bank; an external double-ditch system; an intra-mural walkway around the inner face of the bank and a simple tower at each corner inside the bank. A stone wall, 4 feet thick at the base, was subsequently added to the front of the bank. It is believed that some refortification took place during the Anarchy (AD 1135 – AD 1154).
- 2.3 The resurfacing works were situated immediately adjacent to the Scheduled Monument, but did not directly impact upon the banks themselves.
- 2.4 The archaeological potential of the site was therefore perceived as high for deposits and features of Saxon and Medieval date. This did not prejudice the watching brief against the recovery of finds or features relating to other periods.
- 2.5 The site works were undertaken subsequent to the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent.

## 3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological recording were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;

ii) to attempt to characterize the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

4.1 All penetrative groundworks were undertaken whilst under constant archaeological observation. The approximate location of the works is shown in Figure 2.

4.2 Where groundworks were undertaken by a mechanical excavator, the machine was equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Machine excavation was used only for the removal of non-archaeologically significant material.

4.3 All archaeological investigation and recording was undertaken in accordance with the methodologies detailed in the WSI.

#### **5 RESULTS AND CONCLUSION**

5.1 The monitored mechanical strip measured approximately 40m long by 1.5m wide. The base of the strip comprised a mid grey brown clay silt subsoil (1002). This was directly overlaid by a dark brown clay silt topsoil (1001), up to 0.15m thick, which contained occasional Modern detritus.

5.2 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were present within the monitored area.

5.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with an appropriate museum. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

#### **6 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 2014. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Unpublished.

Foundations Archaeology. 2015. *Resurfacing of Thames Path at Town Banks, Cricklade: Archaeological Watching Brief: Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished.

## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Hugh Beamish of Historic England and Tina Jones of Cricklade Town Council for their help during the course of the project.

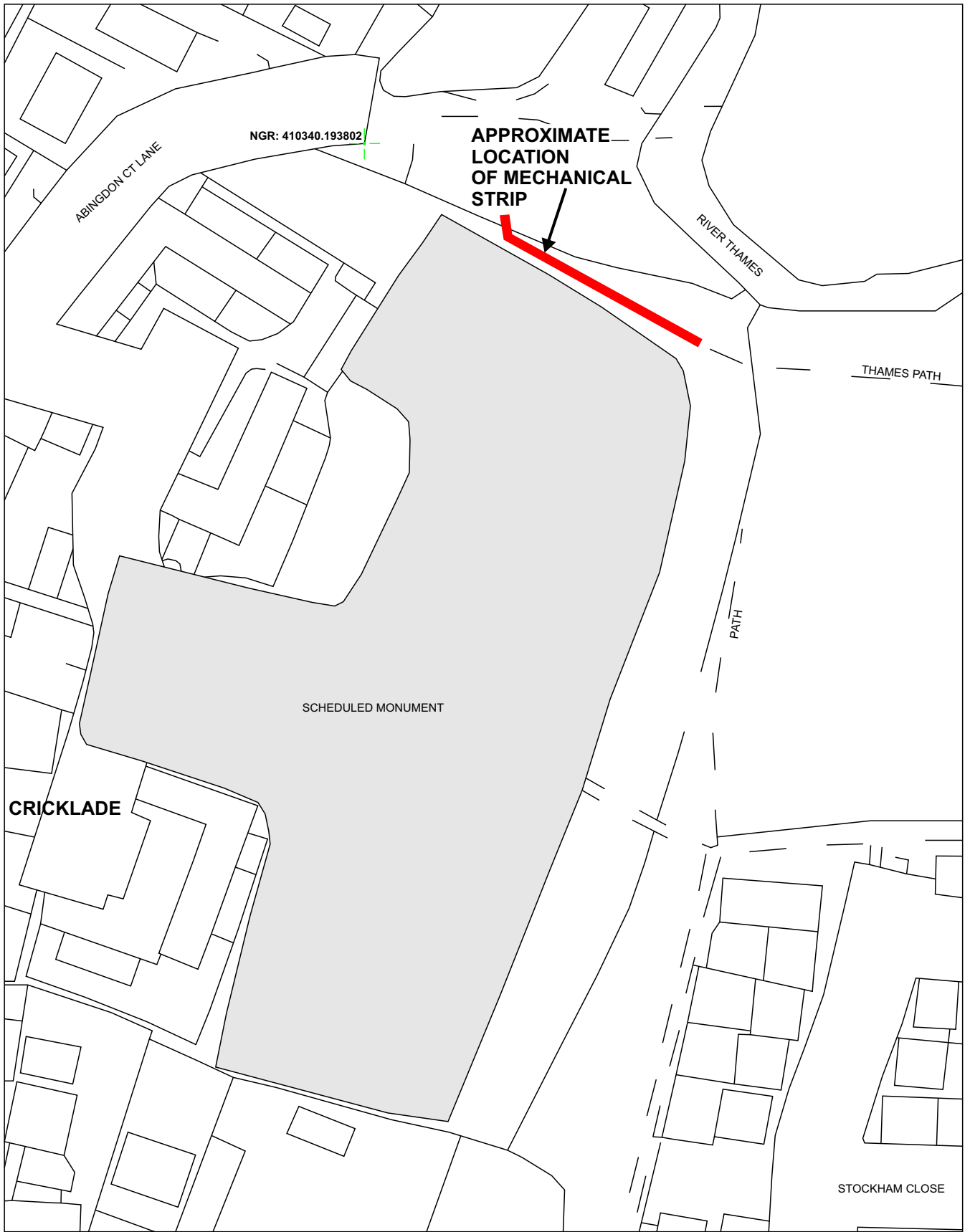




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**FIGURE 1: Site Location**





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N



0m

40m

**FIGURE 2: Site Plan**