

**JOHN RABSON RECREATION GROUND,  
READING,  
BERKSHIRE.**

**NGR: SU 725 701**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

November 2016  
Report No. 1163

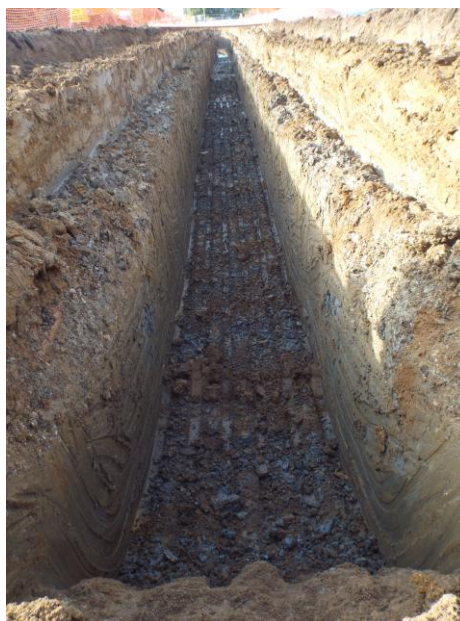


**ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES**

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**Quality Assurance**

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with AMS's Quality Procedures (BS EN ISO 9001: 2008)

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## **SUMMARY**

Between 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief in the area of John Rabson Recreation Ground, Reading, Berkshire (NGR: SU 725 701). The work was commissioned by Claire Hallybone of Thames Water.

The watching brief consisted of the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks during the excavation of a new water main pipe trench.

Within the watched area no archaeological finds, features or deposits were present.

## **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.

### *CBM*

Ceramic building material.

### *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 AD 410 and AD 1066.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Between 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2016 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief for the excavation of a water main within the John Rabson Recreation Ground, Reading, Berkshire (NGR: SU 725 701). The work was commissioned by Claire Hallybone of Thames Water.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2016) The WSI was produced in accordance with the general principles of NPPF12 (*National Planning Policy Framework 2012*) and *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 works and complies with the specification set out in MoRPHE (English Heritage, 2006).

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The site was located to the northeast of the intersection between Hartland Road and Northumberland Avenue, within the John Rabson Recreation Ground playing field. An existing water main had burst and, as such, emergency works were required in order to install a replacement.
- 2.2 The underlying geology was recorded as *London Clay Formation* – clay, silt and sand (BGS on line viewer).
- 2.3 Bronze Age and Iron Age finds and features were recorded in the vicinity of the works. The study area therefore contained the potential for archaeological deposits associated with the Prehistoric period. This did not prejudice the watching brief against the recovery of data relating to other periods.
- 2.4 The emergency works were being carried out under permitted development rights and as such, no archaeological brief had been produced. However, due to the potential for Prehistoric remains to be impacted upon, the Berkshire Archaeology Officer requested that the groundworks be subject to an archaeological watching brief.

## **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 intrusive groundworks were monitored and recorded in order to identify any archaeological finds, features or deposits. Groundworks were carried out under the constant supervision of the archaeologist. A toothless grading bucket was employed to remove any non-significant overburden to reveal the underlying natural deposits. After this point excavation continued with a toothed bucket.

4.2 The main area of excavation (Trench 1, Figure 2) measured a maximum 250m by 5.5m. There was a separate trench (Trench 2, Figure 2) aligned northeast-southwest which connected to the main pipe trench. This measured approximately 10m by 5m with a maximum depth of 1.5m.

4.3 To the eastern edge of the site, the current water main was damaged during excavation works. This caused the majority of the site to flood and washed away much of the turf line and topsoil of the area for approximately 30m westwards.

4.4 Appropriate sections were recorded to be able to characterise the stratigraphy of the area impacted by the groundworks.

4.5 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

#### **5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

5.1 A full stratigraphic description of each representative section of the excavated area is presented in Appendix 1. A summary discussion is given below:

5.2 The stratigraphy across the site was fairly uniform, with the natural deposits of thick plastic yellow brown clay sealed by a grey brown silty clay topsoil (101), which contained Modern material. This was in turn sealed by turf line (100).

5.3 The natural deposits were encountered at a maximum depth of 0.55m below Modern ground level but the depth of the natural across the site was on average 0.35m. The pipe trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.7m below Modern ground level.

## **John Rabson Recreation Ground, Reading, Berkshire: Archaeological Watching Brief**

- 5.4 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within any of the watched areas.
- 5.5 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology. A digital copy of the report will be deposited with OASIS and the digital photography will be archived with Archaeological Data Service.

## **6 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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

English Heritage. 2006. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*. Swindon.

Foundations Archaeology. 2016. *John Rabson Recreation Ground, Reading: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished.

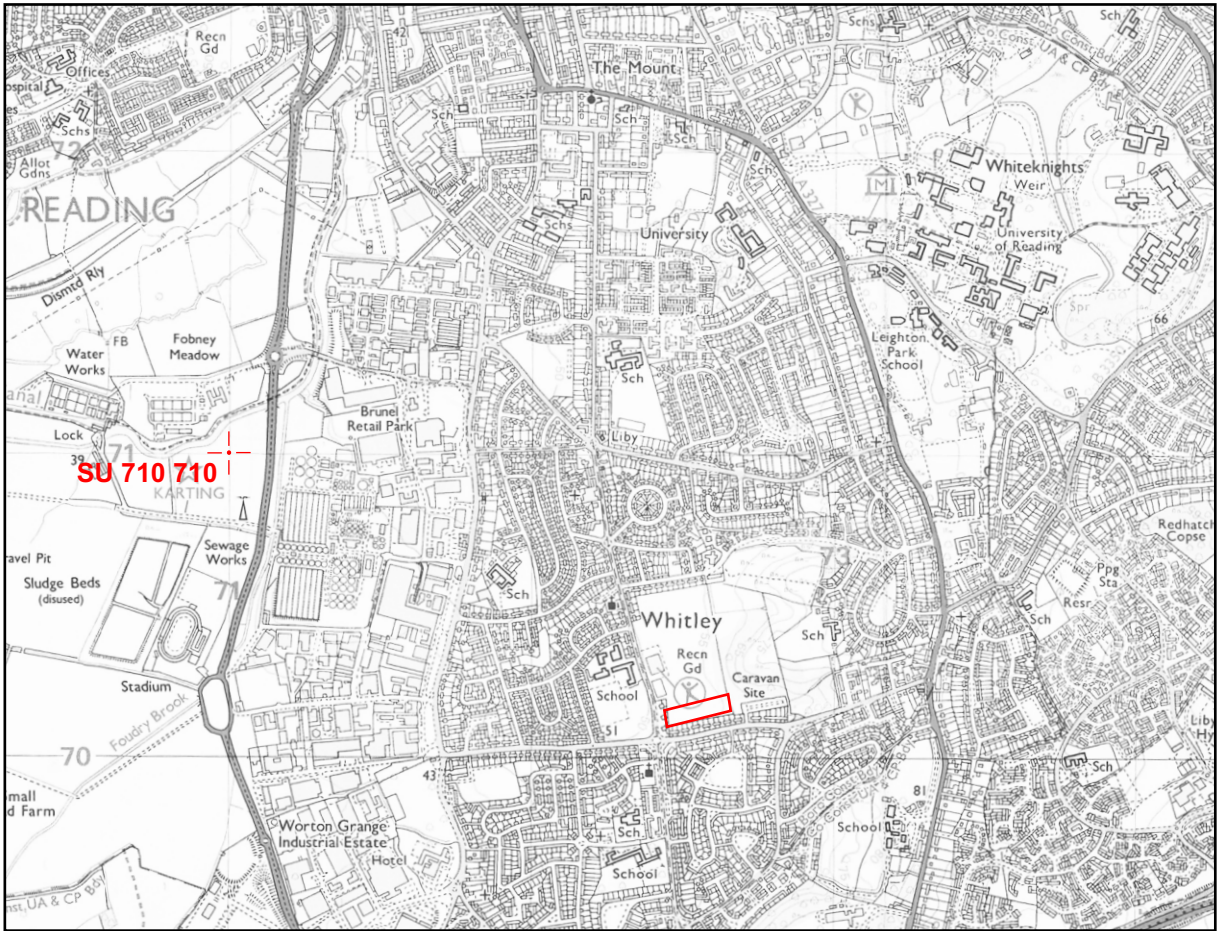
## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Ellie Leary of Berkshire Archaeology Service and Claire Hallybone of Thames Water for their help during the course of the project.



**APPENDIX 1: STRATIGRAPHIC DATA**

<b>CXT</b>	<b>L(m)</b>	<b>W(m)</b>	<b>D(m)</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>LATER THAN</b>	<b>EARLIER THAN</b>
				<b>Pipe Trench:</b> 250m by 5.5m. <b>Natural:</b> Thick plastic yellow brown clay with patches of grey stone and frequent manganese.		
100	250+	5.5+	0.1-0.2	Turf Line.	101	N/A
101	250+	5.5+	0.15-0.35	Topsoil: Grey brown compact silty clay with occasional small to medium stones and stone fragments. Rare charcoal throughout. Contained plastic bags. Diffuse interface with natural.	Natural	100



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**Site Code: JRR16**

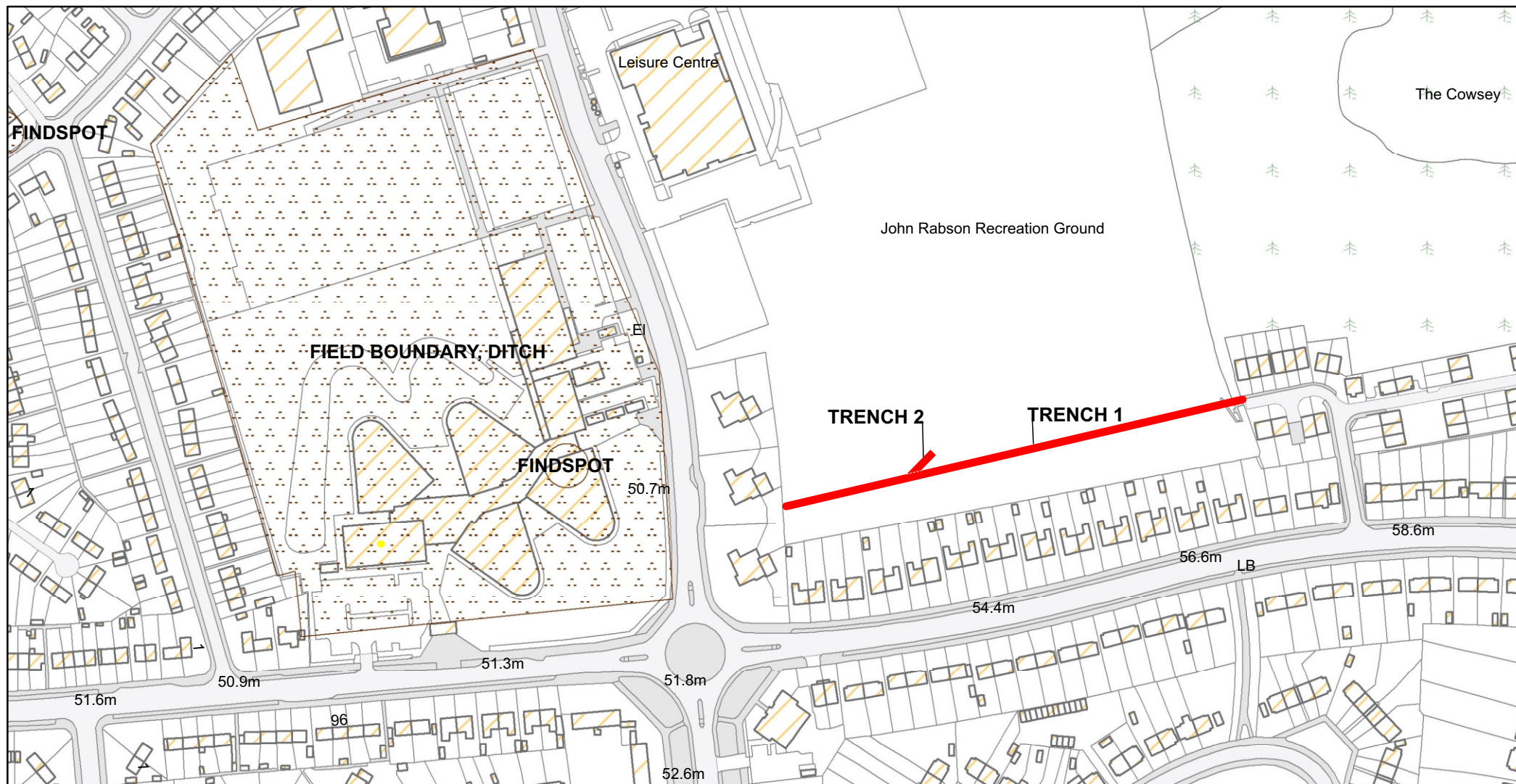
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**SITE LOCATION**



**FIGURE 1: Site Location**



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**Site Code: JRR16**  
**Accession Code:**

 **ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS AND FINDS SPOTS**

 **TRENCH LOCATION**



0m  100m

**FIGURE 2: Location of Pipe Trench**