

**166 NINE MILE RIDE,
FINCHAMPSTEAD,
BERKSHIRE**

NGR: SU 7948 6472

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

June 2010

Report No. 698

Quality Assurance

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CONTENTS

List of Illustrations

Summary

Glossary

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND
- 3 AIMS
- 4 METHODOLOGY
- 5 RESULTS
- 6 CONCLUSION
- 7 ARCHIVE
- 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY
- 9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1: Site Location
- Figure 2: Study Area Location
- Figure 3 Site Plan

Site name: 166 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Berkshire
Site code: NMR10
NGR: SU 7948 6472
Site activity: Archaeological Watching Brief
Date and duration: 7th June 2010; 1 day on site
Location of archive: Currently the office of Foundations Archaeology

SUMMARY

In June 2010 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring on land at 166 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead (NGR: SU 7948 6472). The work was commissioned by Mr Reed.

An Appeal Decision (APP/X0360/A/09/2102058) has allowed the construction of two hardstanding areas for residential caravans with associated services (Planning Application Ref: F/2008/2353). An archaeological condition was placed on planning permission by Berkshire County Council which required the monitoring of all groundworks associated with the proposed development.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were discovered during the monitoring works.

The monitored groundworks were extremely shallow, and did not penetrate the subsoil as the development was largely to be built up above the existing ground level. The groundworks were limited to a topsoil strip within the proposed footprint of the caravans and hard standing, and extremely shallow trenching for services. A new septic tank was installed prior to the archaeological monitoring. The existing septic tank was not removed. The impact of the new septic tank is unknown.

Due to the presence of an *in-situ* subsoil, it is possible that archaeologically significant horizons exist at a greater depth than that exposed during the groundworks.

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.

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.

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.

Roman

The period traditionally dated between AD 43 and *circa* AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June 2010 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring on land at 166 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Berkshire (NGR: SU 7948 6472).
- 1.2 An Appeal Decision (APP/X0360/A/09/2102058) has allowed the construction of two hardstanding areas for residential caravans (Planning Application Ref: F/2008/2353). An archaeological condition was placed on planning permission by Berkshire County Council which required the monitoring of all groundworks associated with the proposed development.
- 1.4 Foundations Archaeology is certified to BS EN ISO 9001: 2000 for quality assurance in the provision of archaeological services. The company is a Registered Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists and subscribes to that organisation's Code of Conduct. All relevant IfA Codes of Practice were adhered to throughout the course of the project.
- 1.5 The project was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) issued by Foundations Archaeology (2010). The WSI was prepared in accordance with discussions held with Berkshire Archaeology, the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (rev. 2008) and *General Standards for Fieldwork Projects* (Berkshire Archaeology n.d.) and the principles of Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5, 2010).
- 1.6 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works. The project was undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (rev. 2008) and in accordance with the written scheme of investigation (Foundations, 2010).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An Appeal Decision (APP/X0360/A/09/2102058) has allowed the construction of two hardstanding areas for residential caravans (Planning Application Ref: F/2008/2353).
- 2.2 The site is located at NGR: SU 7948 6472. The underlying geology consists of Flood Plain Gravels overlying Lower Bagshot Beds, which in turn overlies London Clay (BGS, 2008).
- 2.3 The site is located in an area of known archaeological potential. It is situated approximately 150m northwest of a scheduled Bronze Bell Barrow (SAM 12057) and a cropmark 100m to the south may represent a second barrow (Mary

O'Donoghue pers. comm.). A further prehistoric earthwork, or barrow, is known from approximately 500m west of the site.

- 2.4 The site is also located in the vicinity of the Devil's Highway Roman road which ran from London to Silchester. The course of the road is assumed to be 1.3km south of the site, but the actual course of the road has not been defined. A trench excavated in 1978 tentatively identified the road only 200m to the west of the site and the potential therefore exists for the course of the road, and any associated roadside activity, to be present within the site area.
- 2.5 The study area therefore contains the potential for archaeological finds predominantly dating to the Prehistoric and Roman periods. This did not prejudice the watching brief against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains, as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary.
- 3.2 These aims were to be achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
 - i) to record any archaeological remains within the area of impact caused by topsoil stripping for the foundations of the caravans, and to recover any artefacts from the surface of exposed archaeological features;
 - ii) To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - iii) To attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present on the site;
 - iv) To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.
 - v) To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present;

vi) to record the location, dimensions and impact of the septic tank and hard-standing that have already been installed, as far as possible within the limits of the watching brief and to illustrate these within the final report;

vii) to make the results of the investigations available.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The groundworks were undertaken using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All appropriate groundworks were conducted under archaeological supervision and monitored and recorded in order to identify archaeological finds and deposits.
- 4.2 Prior to the arrival of the archaeologist, a new septic tank was installed on the site and archaeological recording of the newly excavated area for the septic tank was consequently not possible. The existing septic tank was not removed.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The area of proposed hard-standing for the caravans was topsoil stripped to a depth of 0.09m, exposing a dark brown sandy subsoil (102). No archaeological features were present at this depth. The topsoil (101) comprised a mid brown friable silt sand. Further reduction within this area was not undertaken as the area was to be built up to a higher level.
- 5.2 The service trenches to the proposed caravan sites were designed to be shared by all services, thereby limiting any impact on archaeology that may be present in the area. A total of three service runs joining to the newly installed septic tank were excavated (Figure 2).
- 5.3 The maximum depth of the service trenches was 0.15m, as the area is to be built up to raise the level of the development, rather than cut into the ground. The stratigraphy comprised a mid brown friable sandy topsoil (101) ranging in depth from 0.03 to 0.09 m, overlying a dark brown sandy subsoil (102). No archaeological features were exposed during the excavation of these trenches.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The monitored groundworks were extremely shallow, and did not through penetrate the subsoil. The groundworks were limited to a topsoil strip within the proposed footprint of the caravans and hard standing, as well as extremely shallow trenching for services. The existing septic tank was not removed. The impact of the new septic tank is unknown, as it was not monitored.

- 6.2 Due to the presence of an *in-situ* subsoil, it is possible that archaeologically significant horizons exist at a greater depth than that exposed during the groundworks. Aerial photographic evidence shows heavy tree cover across the area in the recent past. This was confirmed by the landowner who also stated that and that much modern rubbish and debris has been buried on the site. This past history of the site does not preclude the potential for finds, features and deposits to exist below the subsoil level.

7 ARCHIVE

- 7.1 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology. It comprises:

Digital photographs
Record sheets
Correspondence
Written scheme of Investigation
Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Method statement

- 7.2 The archive has been prepared in accordance with *MoRPHE* (English Heritage 2006) and *Guidelines for the preparation of archaeological archives for long-term storage* (UKIC 1990). It will be deposited with Reading Museum Service within 12 months.
- 7.3 The results of the work will be published in an appropriate journal and an OASIS report will be completed and submitted.

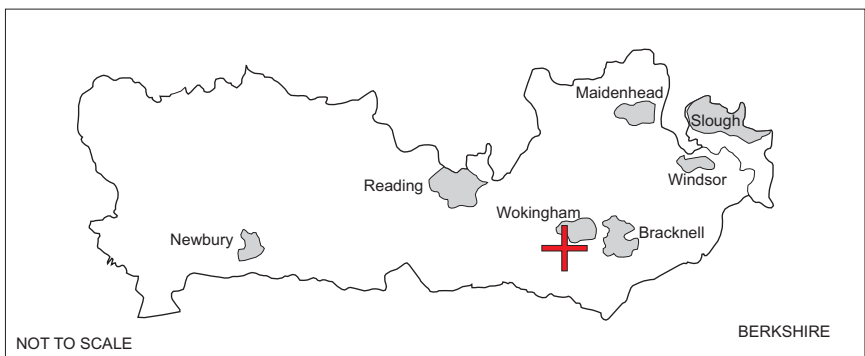
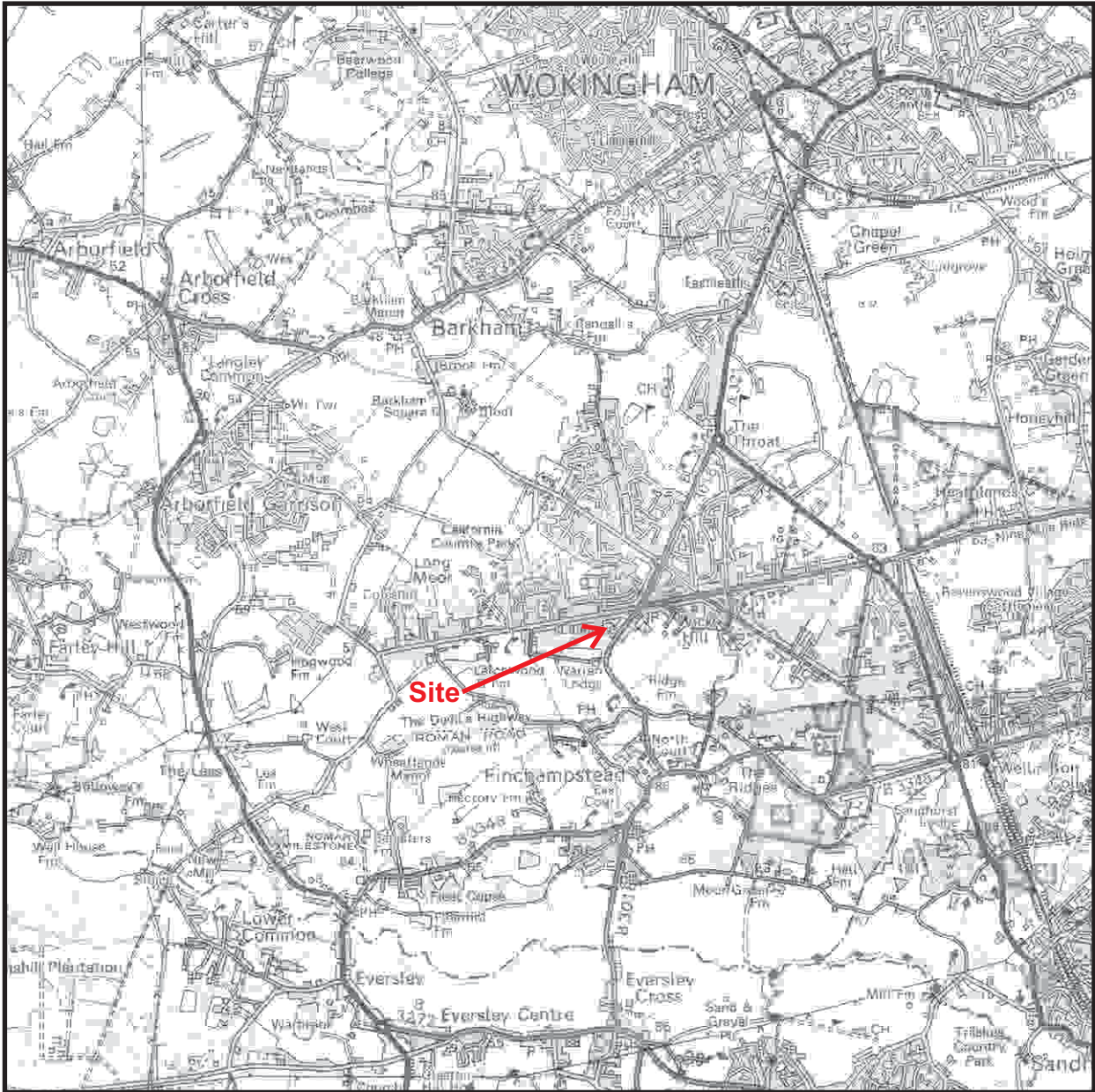
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Foundations Archaeology, 2010, *166 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Written Scheme of Investigation*.

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9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank the on site ground workers and Mr. Reed for their cooperation during the course of this project.



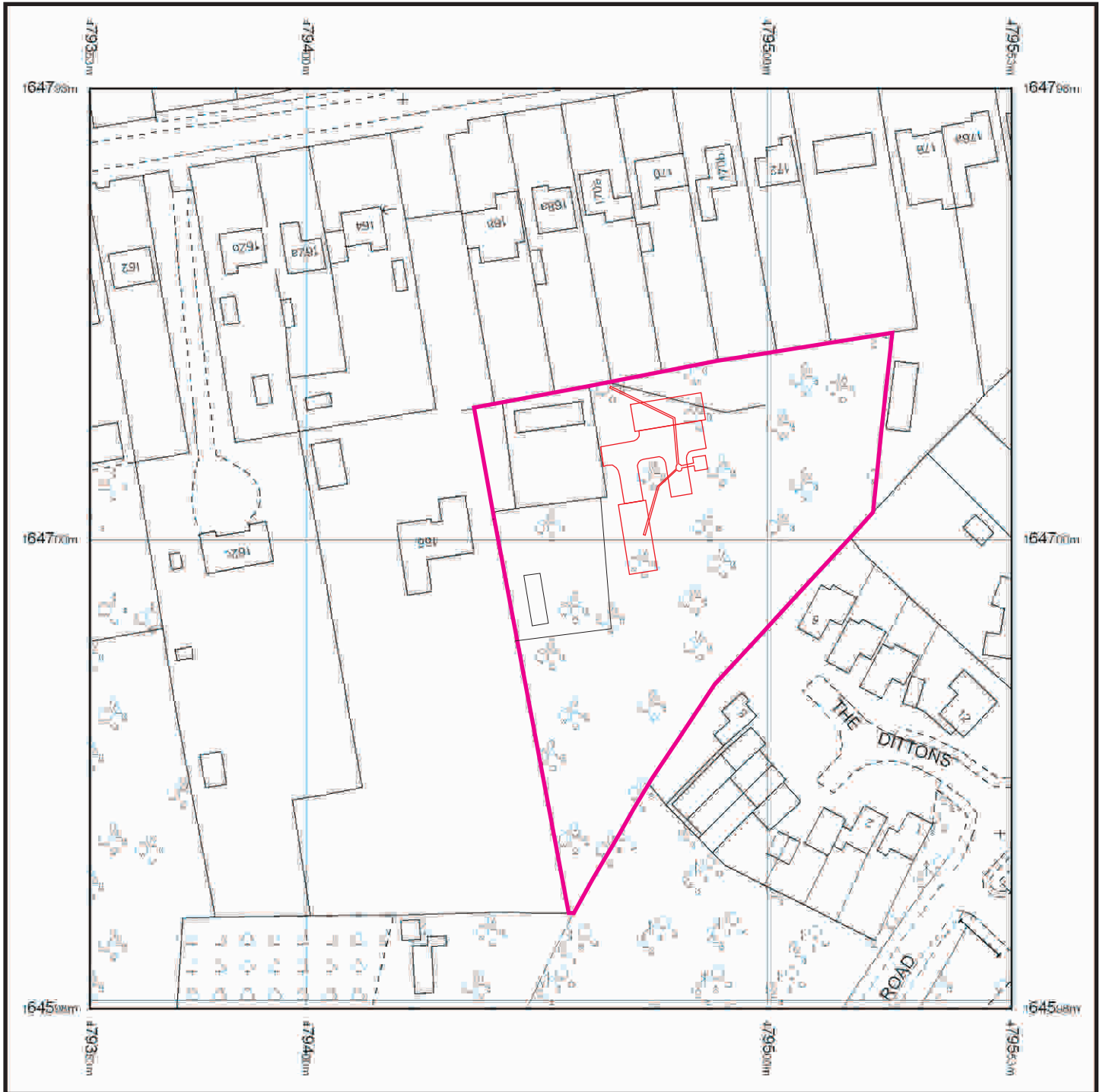
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1:50,000@A4

FIGURE 1: Site Location



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- STUDY AREA**
- PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**



FIGURE 2: Study Area Location

