

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**146 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead,
Wokingham, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Site Code: NMR12/20

(SU 7921 6473)

**146 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead,
Wokingham, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief
for Mr Paul Jessett**

by Susan Porter
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code NMR12/20

October 2012

Summary

Site name: 146 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7921 6473

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 1st – 8th October 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter

Site code: NMR 12/20

Area of site: 0.11ha

Summary of results: Both the watching brief and archaeological evaluation revealed no deposits of archaeological interest. Two of the six test pits revealed deposits suitable for on site sieving but yielded no artefacts.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited in an appropriate museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority).

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 12.10.12
	Steve Preston✓ 12.10.12

146 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief

by Susan Porter

Report 12/20

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief and field evaluation carried out at 146 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire SU 79215 64730 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Paul Jessett, 146 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Berkshire.

Planning permission (app F/2011/0743) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council to redevelop the site for a new house following demolition of the existing building. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology. The archaeological evaluation has been requested in order to determine the archaeological potential of the site and if necessary, allow for appropriate mitigation of the effects of the development. The watching brief was to monitor the removal of the existing house foundations.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. It is recognized that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) has since superseded PPS5. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary Neale, Archaeological Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, and monitored by Ms Fiona MacDonald, Principal Archaeologist with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The watching brief was undertaken by Susan Porter on 1st October 2012 and the evaluation by Susan Porter and Aiji Castle on 8th October 2012. The site code is NMR 12/20. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate designated museum or repository to be decided by the local planning authority.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south side of Nine Mile Ride in Finchampstead (Fig. 1), north of woodland at Warren Lane and south-east of Longmore Lake, in a residential area (Fig. 2). The site consisted of a demolished house plot, its former gardens and driveway. Within the southern part of the property lies a Scheduled Monument comprising two round barrows. The site is at an elevation of 70.60m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as the Lower Bagshot Beds (BGS 1946); this fine-grained sand was observed on site.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the site of two round barrows – that is presumed Bronze Age burial mounds. The barrows are a Scheduled Ancient Monument, however, only one of the barrows survives as an earthwork (Fig. 2), the other has been levelled or destroyed. The scheduled area extends into the southern part of the property boundary but is not within the area affected by the development. It was anticipated that contemporary deposits or further burial remains may be present in the vicinity. The environs of the site contains a modest range of finds from other periods, with the Roman road from Silchester to London (The Devils Highway) projected to pass 700m or so to the south (Ford 1987). A Palaeolithic hand axe is also recorded as having come from the environs of the site. A watching brief to the east, however, did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest (Jenkins and Pine 2006).

Objectives and methodology

Two components of work were proposed. A watching brief during removal of the existing house foundations and a field evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present;
- to determine if any deposits contemporary with the round barrows were present; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

A watching brief was to be undertaken during the removal of the foundations of the existing house, and was to be followed by an archaeological evaluation which proposed to dig three trenches, 11m long and 1.60m wide targeted at the footprints of the new structure and access. A contingency of 5m of trench was included should it be required to clarify findings made in the initial evaluation. Topsoil and overburden was removed with a small 360° type machine equipped with a ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological deposits were encountered these were to be hand cleaned and excavated.

It was further proposed to dig six test pits to assess the artefact content of the topsoil/ subsoil. The test pits were to be 1.60m x 1.00m in extent. The spoil from beneath the turf was to be dry sieved on site using a 10mm mesh. 100 litres of soil from each pit were to be sieved, if artefact-rich deposits were discovered they were to be sieved using a 4mm mesh. If complex strata were encountered each layer was to be processed separately.

Results

Watching Brief

The watching brief observed the removal of the existing house foundations alongside removal of a concrete garage and car port and the concrete flooring for a shed (Fig. 3). The concrete pad for the shed was 3.40m wide and comprised a concrete pad laid over bricks directly above the topsoil. The concrete floor of the garage and car port was 10m in length, 3m wide and also comprised concrete over brick laid above the topsoil.

The foundations comprised concrete and brick, an average of 0.40m in depth and 0.70m wide. The stratigraphy where visible was heavily disturbed but broadly comprised 0.10m light brown yellow sand and 0.10m mid yellow brown sand with gravel, overlying 0.20m of very dark silty sand possibly made ground. The natural geology was not observed during the watching brief phase.

Evaluation

All three trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3). They were all 13.0m in length and varied in depth between 0.50–0.75m. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned north-west to south-east and was 13m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of sand and gravel made ground forming the modern drive surface above 0.20m of light grey sand subsoil overlying 0.15m dark grey black sandy silty with heavy root disturbance. This in turn overlay mid orange yellow sand natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned north–south and was 13m in length and 0.50m in depth. The stratigraphy (Fig. 4) consisted of 0.30–0.40m of made ground (brick, gravel, etc) above 0.05–0.10m dark grey black sandy silt subsoil overlying mid orange yellow gravelly sand natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned roughly north–south and was 13m in length and 0.75m in depth. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30–0.40m of made ground above 0.05–0.10m dark grey black sandy silt subsoil overlying mid orange yellow gravelly sand natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Test Pits

Five separate test pits (Fig. 3) were excavated, with the sixth one being combined with the south eastern end of Trench 1. No artefacts of archaeological interest were discovered. A list of test pits giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 2.

Test Pits 1, 2 and 3 (Pl. 2)

Test Pits 1, 2 and 3 had a similar stratigraphy comprising 0.20–0.25m demolition rubble overlying mid yellow orange sand with gravel (natural geology). No deposits of archaeological interest were observed and as the made ground directly overlay the natural geology this was not sieved for finds.

Test Pit 4

In Test Pit 4 the stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of gravel and sand made ground, and 0.40m dark brown grey silty sand subsoil overlying mid yellow orange sand with gravel natural geology (Fig. 4). The layer of made ground was separated from the silty sand deposit and 100 litres of the dark brown grey silty sand layer were dry sieved on site. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed within the test pit. A single sherd of modern china pottery was observed (this was not retained).

Test Pit 5

In Test Pit 5 the stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of made ground demolition rubble and 0.45m light grey sand subsoil overlying mid yellow orange sand with gravel natural geology. The layer of made ground was separated from the subsoil deposit and 100 litres of the light grey sandy subsoil were dry sieved on site. Three fragments of ceramic building material (possibly drain) were observed along with a single sherd of modern green bottle glass (these were not retained). No deposits of archaeological interest were observed within the test pit.

Test Pit 6

The stratigraphy of Test Pit 6 as that of Trench 1. 100L of the dark grey black sandy silt was sieved but no deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no finds recovered pit.

Conclusion

Although the site had archaeological potential due to the proximity of two (possible Bronze Age) round barrows, the archaeological watching brief and evaluation did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest. The demolition rubble and made ground relating to the previous house were dominant in Trenches 2 and 3 with very little subsoil surviving below the area of the house. Trench 1 appeared to be located in relatively undisturbed ground, however, heavy rooting was prevalent through the length of the trench, and no deposits of archaeological interest were observed. The test pits also yielded nothing of archaeological interest.

The results of the archaeological watching brief and evaluation suggest low archaeological potential for the area of the site in which the new building is to be constructed.

References

- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept of Highways and Planning Occas Pap **1**, Reading
- Jenkins, P and Pine, J, 2006, '160 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief', TVAS unpubl rep 05/140, Reading
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	13.0	1.60	0.70	0–0.20m modern drive surfacing gravel, made ground sand, 0.20-0.40m light grey sand subsoil, 0.40-0.55m dark grey black sandy silt with root action, 0.55+m mid orange yellow sand natural geology. [PI. 1]
2	13.0	1.60	0.50	0–0.30m brick, refuse gravel made ground, 0.30-0.40m dark grey black sandy silt, 0.40+m mid orange yellow gravelly sand natural geology.
3	13.0	1.60	0.75	0–0.40m demolition rubble refuse made ground, 0.40-0.45m dark grey black sandy silt, 0.40+m mid yellow orange sand with gravel natural geology.

APPENDIX 2: Test Pit Details

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	1.60	1.00	0.20	0–0.20m gravel/ demolition rubble made ground 0.20+m mid yellow orange sand with gravel natural geology.
2	1.60	1.00	0.20	0–0.20m gravel/ demolition rubble brick made ground 0.20+m mid yellow orange sand with gravel natural geology.
3	1.60	1.00	0.25	0–0.25m gravel/ demolition rubble brick made ground 0.25+m mid yellow orange sand with gravel natural geology. [Pl. 2]
4	1.60	1.00	0.55	0–0.15m gravel sand made ground 0.15-0.55m dark brown grey silty sand subsoil, 0.55+m mid yellow orange sand with gravel natural geology. Dry sieved on site, no finds recovered.
5	1.60	1.00	0.65	0–0.10m made ground, demolition rubble 0.10-0.55m light grey sand subsoil 0.55+m mid yellow orange sand with gravel natural geology. No archaeology observed. Dry sieved on site, no finds recovered.



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 Figure 1. Location of site within Finchampstead and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Nine Mile Ride.

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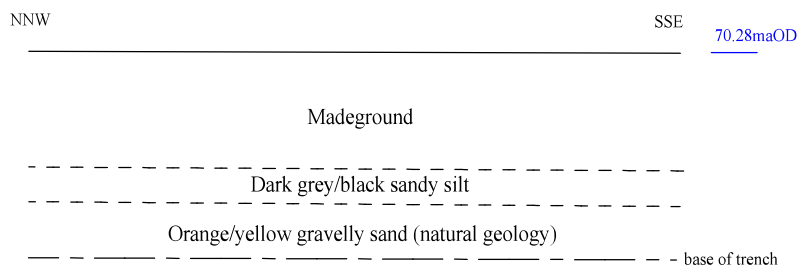
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Figure 3. Location of trenches and test pits.

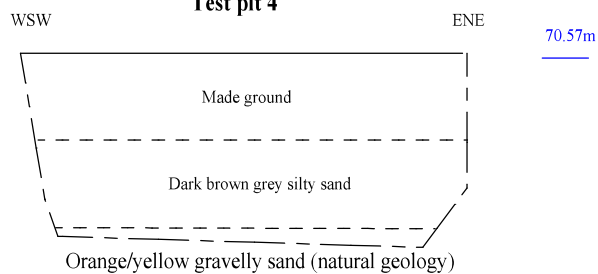


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Trench 2



Test pit 4



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Figure 4. Representative sections.





Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north west, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Test pit 3, looking east, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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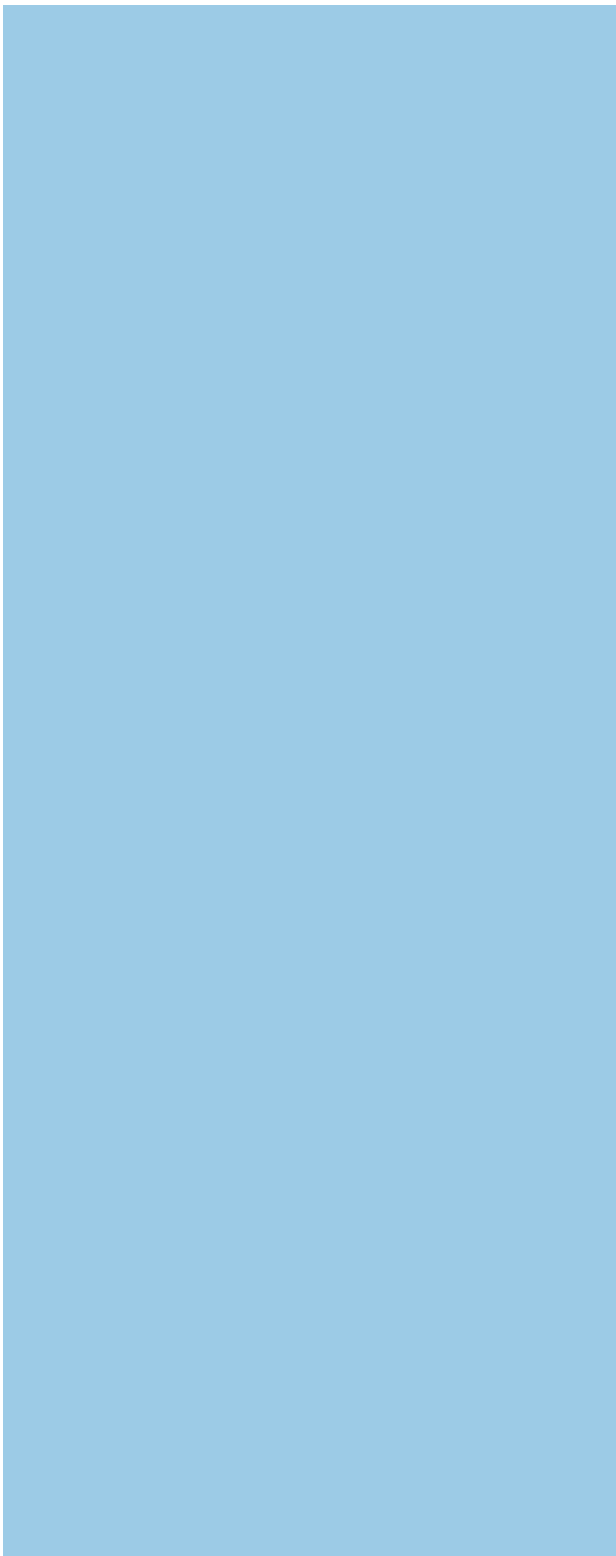
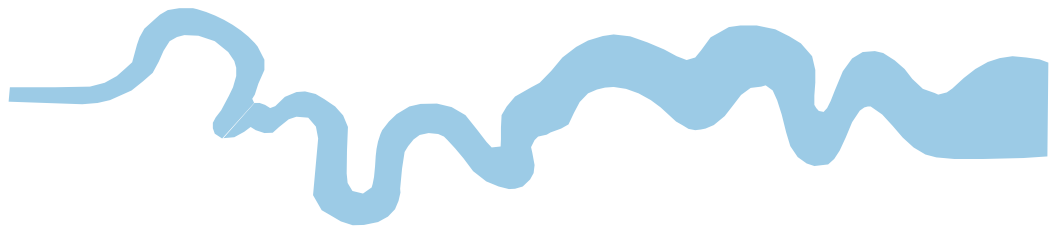
Plates 1 and 2.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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