

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Slough Cultural Centre and Library Proposal,
Mackenzie Street, Slough, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by David Platt and Tim Dawson

Site Code: MSS10/74

(SU 9770 7980)

Slough Cultural Centre and Library Proposal, Mackenzie Street, Slough, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For CgMs Consulting

By David Platt and Tim Dawson

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MSS10/74

May 2013

Summary

Site name: Slough Cultural Centre and Library Proposal, Mackenzie Street, Slough, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9765 7990

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 29th April to 9th May 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson

Site code: MSS10-74

Summary of results: No finds or features of archaeological significance were found.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an approved local museum in due course.

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Slough Cultural Centre and Library Proposal, Mackenzie Street, Slough, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report 10/74

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief during geotechnical investigations carried out at land to the north-west of Mackenzie Street, Slough, Berkshire (SU 9770 7980) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sally Dicks, of CgMs Consulting, 140 London Wall, London, EC2Y 5DN.

Planning permission is to be sought from Slough Borough Council to construct a new Cultural Centre and Library on land to the north-west of Mackenzie Street, Slough, Berkshire (SU9765 7990). An outline consent for redevelopment of the 'Heart of Slough' (S/00533/001) of which this site forms a part, has already been gained with a condition relating to archaeology. The proposed library site comprises an irregular parcel of land of c. 0.5ha (Pl. 1). As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, a watching brief has been proposed as detailed in *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010) and the Borough's policies on archaeology. It is acknowledged that PPS5 is now superseded by The Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012).

The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson between the 29th April and 9th May 2013 and the site code is MSS 10/74. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an approved local museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the northwest of Mackenzie Street, Slough (Fig. 2) and comprises an irregular parcel of land bordered to the west by William Street (A332), the north by Wellington Street and the Catholic Church of Our Lady Immaculate and St Ethelbert, and to the south by the rear of the properties on the High Street. The underlying geology is mapped as Langley Silt, a mixture of sandy clay and silt (brickearth) over Upnor and Reading formations of the Lambeth group clay (silty clay with sandy beds, gravel at base) (BGS 2004). This was observed in the watching brief as a mid reddish brown sandy clay. The site lies at a height of c.30m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the 'Heart of Slough' project has been highlighted in an assessment report for the site (Scott Wilson 2005). In summary that report considers that overall the project lies in an area with a low archaeological potential, though unlike areas to the north of the railway line, the area has not obviously been quarried for brickearth or gravel. A small number of finds and sites are recorded in the Berkshire Historic Environment comprising a few Palaeolithic handaxes and later struck flints. By way of contrast there are several sites further afield with Montem Mound (a probable early medieval castle) to the west, Upton Court to the south and dense and extensive archaeology on the suburban fringes such as at Cippenham, Wexham and Colnbrook where recent large scale development has been archaeologically monitored (Ford *et al.* 2003; Ford 2012a and b; Taylor 2012a and b). However, the proposed library site lies close to Slough High Street. Slough town centre does have medieval and perhaps late Saxon origins, but it is thought that it is no more than a hamlet in those early times (Ford 1987). Historic maps such as those of John Warburton (1749) or John Rocque (1761) show the existence of Slough and its position relative to the identifiable road network and it is usually considered that the remains of earlier, medieval settlement will be in the same place. The site therefore appears to lie within or close to the location of the early origins of Slough. The site has been previously developed on several occasions in the 19th and 20th century but with pockets of land apparently less heavily developed than others.

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the project are to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the geotechnical works. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any ground reduction, and the digging of foundation trenches and service runs.

Results (Fig. 2)

Service run trial trenches

TT102

This trench was 6.5m long x 0.45m wide and was c. 0.9m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0- 0.10m of Tarmac overlying concrete, this concrete then overlay a reddish brown sandy made ground with flint and brick inclusions. Services were encountered aligned N – S. The natural geology was not exposed and no features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

TT103

This trench was 2m x 0.3m and was 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.10m of Tarmac overlying 0.15m of made ground which in turn overlay concrete at the SE end and the fill of a pipe trench at the NW end. The natural geology was not exposed and no features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

Test Pits

TP102

Test pit 102 was obstructed by services and could not be completed. The natural geology was not exposed and no features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

TP104

Test pit 104 was 0.6m wide, 1.80m long and 1m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of concrete overlying a reddish brown sandy made ground with frequent brick and Tarmac inclusions. The natural geology was not exposed and no features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

TP105

Test pit 105 was 0.60m wide, 1.80m long and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy comprised of 0.37m of topsoil with occasional brick inclusions directly overlying the reddish brown clay natural geology. No features or finds of any archaeological interest were observed.

TP106

Test pit 106 was 0.50m wide, 1.50m long and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy comprised of 0.2m of concrete above a reddish brown sandy made ground, The natural geology was not exposed and no features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

TP107

Test pit 107 was 0.6m wide, 2m long and 1.2m deep. The stratigraphy comprised of 0.30m of concrete overlying a reddish brown sandy made ground, The natural geology was not exposed and no features or finds of archaeological interest were observed.

TP108

Test pit 108 was 0.6m wide, 2m long and c. 1.2m deep. The stratigraphy comprised of 0.30m of concrete overlying a reddish brown sandy made ground. The natural geology was not exposed and nothing of archaeological interest was observed.

TP110 (Pl. 2)

Test pit 110 was 0.72m wide, 2.35m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of Tarmac overlying 0.17m of mixed sand and hardcore. In turn this overlay 0.04m of Tarmac which overlay a dark brown silty clay with frequent brick, china and concrete inclusions. The natural geology was not exposed and no features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

TP112

Test pit 112 was 0.7m wide, 3.65m long and 4.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of a dark brown silty clay with brick, china and concrete inclusions. The natural geology was not exposed and no features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

TP114 (Pl. 3)

Test pit 114 was 0.8m wide and 2.5m long and 0.9m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of Tarmac overlying 0.18m of reinforced concrete, this in turn overlay 0.55m of mid reddish brown sandy clay with frequent modern brick inclusions, this overlay the natural geology which was a mid reddish brown sandy clay with occasional flint inclusions. No features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

TP115 (Pl. 4)

Test pit 115 was 0.40m wide and 2.2m long and 1.05m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.14m of topsoil overlying 0.16m of dark greyish brown sandy clay subsoil with occasional modern brick inclusions, this overlay 0.14m of Tarmac which in turn overlay 0.37m of concrete. This overlay 0.19m of made ground which overlay a mid reddish brown sandy clay natural geology. No features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

Observation Pits

OP102

Observation pit 102 was 0.50m wide, 0.62m long and 0.87m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of Tarmac overlying 0.20m of reinforced concrete, this in turn overlay 0.20m of dark brown/black sandy gravel with frequent concrete, china, glass, brick and clinker inclusions, this overlay the natural geology. No features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

OP103

Observation pit 103 was 0.52m wide, 0.94m long and 0.82m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.09m of Tarmac overlying 0.32m of reinforced concrete, this in turn overlay 0.09m of dark brown/black sandy gravel with modern brick inclusions, this overlay the natural geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was observed.

OP105

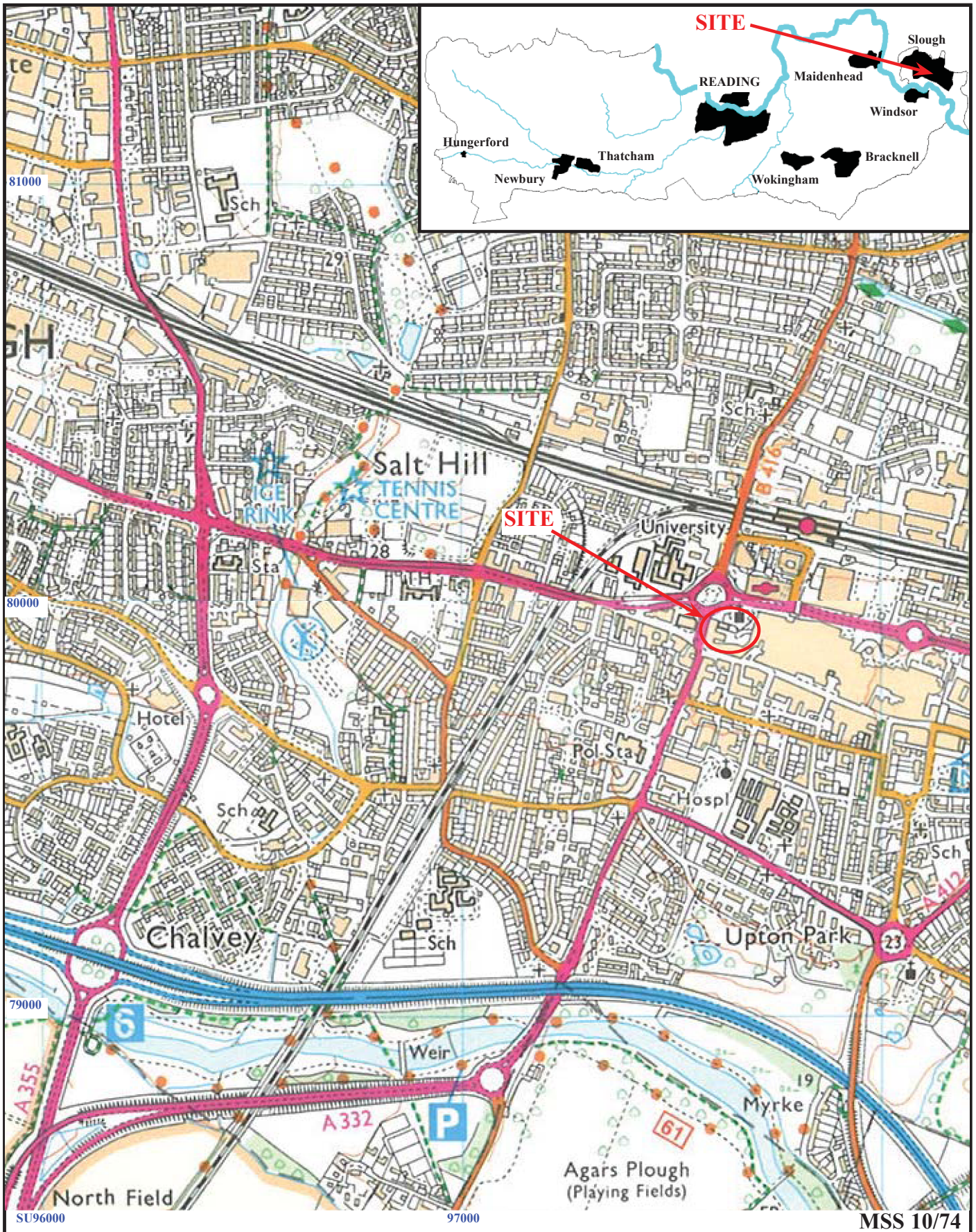
Observation pit 105 was 0.45m wide, 0.60m long and 1.12m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.11m of Tarmac overlying 0.29m of reinforced concrete, this in turn overlay 0.45m of dark brown/black sandy gravel with frequent post-medieval brick and tile inclusions, this overlay the natural geology. No features or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

Conclusion

The various test pits and trenches dug were monitored but did not reveal any finds nor deposits of archaeological interest. Relatively few trenches revealed the underlying natural geology.

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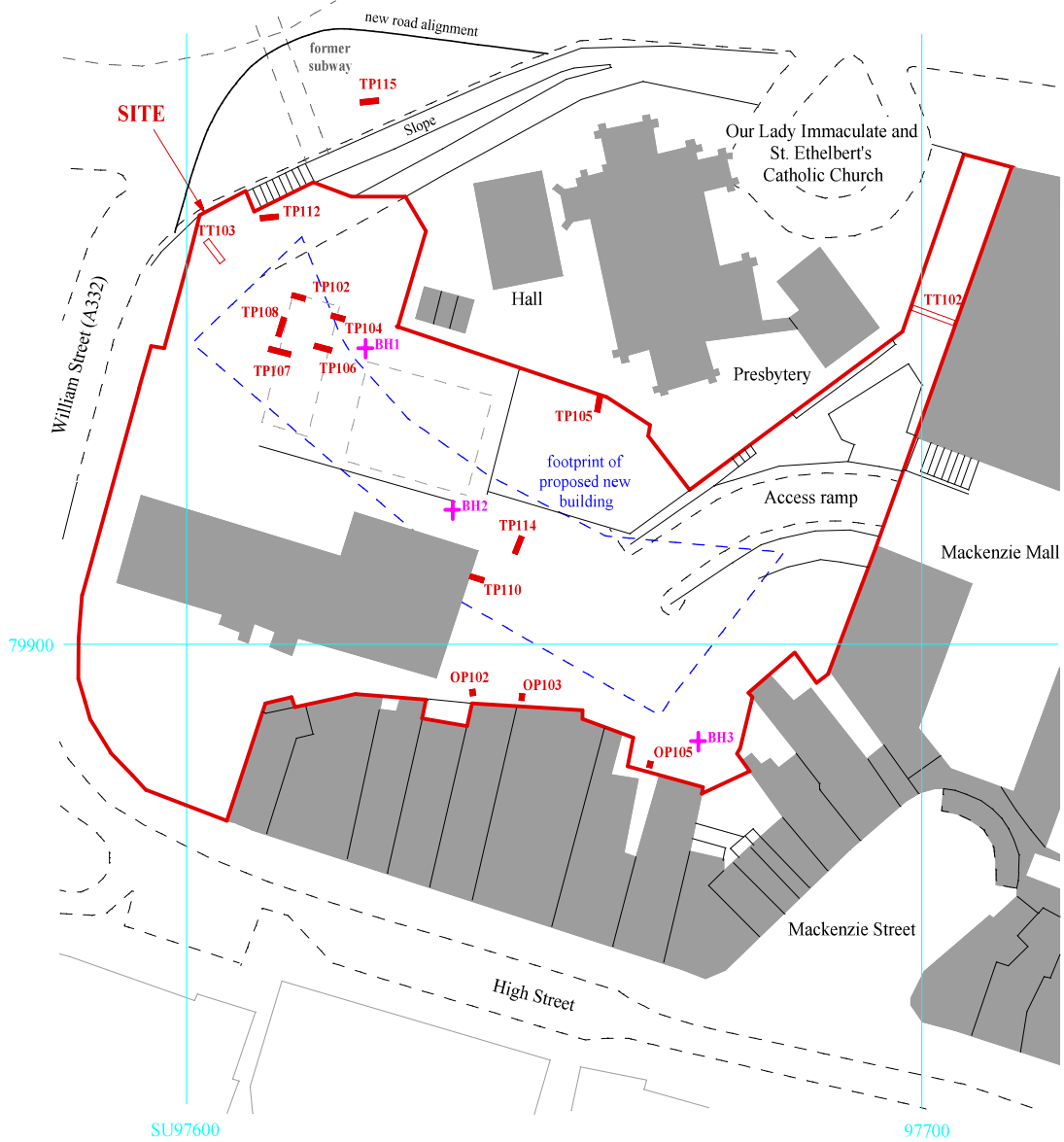


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Figure 1. Location of site within Slough and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of observed areas.



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Plate 1. General site view, looking south-east,
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Test pit 110 against edge of Library, looking west,
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. Test pit 114, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Test pit 115, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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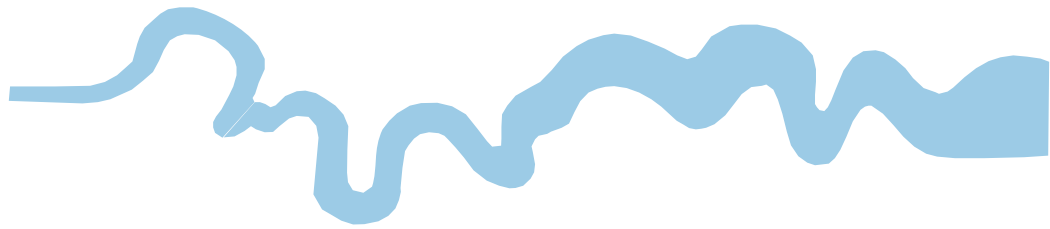
Plates 1 to 4.

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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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