THAMES VALLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

Kentwood Farm Sewage Connection, Ashridge Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire

Archaeological Recording Action

by Daniel Strachan

Site Code: KFW15/62

(SU 81390 70095- SU 81545 70220)

Kentwood Farm Sewer Connection, Ashridge Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire

An Archaeological Recording Action

For Thames Water Utilities

by Daniel Strachan

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code KFW 15/62

May 2015

Summary

Site name: Kentwood Farm Sewer Connection, Ashridge Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire

Grid reference: (SU 81390 70095- SU 81545 70220)

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 30th March – 1st April 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Daniel Strachan

Site code: KFW 15/62

Summary of results: A short pipeline easement and trench were monitored. Two possible features of archaeological interest were recorded but neither contained dating evidence.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 15.05.15 Steve Preston✓ 15.05.15

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An Archaeological Recording Action

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Report 15/62

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out to connect the sewage from a new development at Kentwood Farm, Wokingham to the Sewage Treatment Works off Bell Foundry Lane, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU 81390 70095- SU 81545 70220) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Claire Hallybone of Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Maple Lodge STW, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 9SQ.

The proposed new pipeline work constitutes permitted development and planning permission is not required. Thames Water and its agents and contractors, however, have clearly defined archaeological obligations under the *Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation* (Water Industry Act 1989) and therefore Thames Water is obliged to consider and mitigate the consequences of its activities. The fieldwork followed written schemes of investigation prepared for the route. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Strachan from 30th March to 1st April 2015. The site code is KFW15/62. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate museum to be determined by the local planning authority in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in north Wokingham at Ashridge Wood Farm off Bell Foundry Lane. It is partly within the confines of the Wokingham Sewage Treatment Works facility and continued into adjacent farmland to the east (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 48.5m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and the land is generally flat but with a slight incline towards the east. The site lies close to the junction of London clay and overlying river terrace deposits (BGS 1946). The natural geology of the site was observed as pale orangey yellow silty clay with occasional to frequent bands of whitish grey gravel.

Archaeological background

The site lies on the London Clay land of East Berkshire, which is a geological outcrop not noted for an extensive and dense archaeological heritage (Ford 1987). Nevertheless more recent field survey has provided more detail and shown the presence and scale of occupation during the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods.

Field survey to the north and west has revealed a low level spread of prehistoric and Roman pottery (Ford 1987) indicating the presence of some settlement of these periods in the area. Similarly more recent evaluation just to the north east of the site has revealed Roman deposits comprising a ditch containing 3rd/4th century pottery (Taylor 2010a). Additional evaluation further to the east revealed no further deposits but did recover an Iron Age glass bead. (Taylor 2010b).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the recording action were to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of intrusion.

The specific research aims of this project are:

to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site; and
to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

The fieldwork comprised two components: the stripping of topsoil to provide an easement, and the digging of the pipe trench itself.

Results

The pipe trench and easement trench was subdivided into 4 segments for ease of reference (Fig. 2; Pl. 1). The pipeline was 185m long.

The easement

Overburden was removed from the majority of the pipeline route to form an easement typically 7m wide. Overburden was not removed in the location where the existing access track lay. Typically 0.2m of turf/topsoil was stripped to expose a brown silty clay subsoil. No archaeological deposits were observable in the easement strip.

The pipe trench

The precise location of the pipe trench route was dug using a 2m wide toothless (ditching) bucket to a depth, initially, down to the top of the archaeologically relevant horizon which was the top of the natural geology. This was carried out under archaeological supervision. This involved the removal of c. 0.3-0.6m of subsoil. The pipes themselves were eventually to be laid in a trench c. 2m deep.

Only the longest trench (2) contained possible archaeological anomalies and was left open whist these features were investigated and recorded. The trench was then backfilled. Trenches 1, 3 and 4 were excavated the following day but as no deposits of archaeological interest were observed they were immediately backfilled. Spoil heaps were monitored during excavation but nothing of interest was recorded.

The fieldwork in trench 2 identified the presence of two discreet possible archaeological deposits. Possible posthole (1) was 0.49m across and 0.29m deep (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 3). It contained a single brown silty clay fill with a few fragments of fired clay and a minute amount of charcoal (recovered by sieving) but was otherwise undated. A possible shallow pit (2) lay nearby which was at least 0.4m wide but only 0.05m deep again with a single brown silty clay fill (53) and a minute amount of charcoal, but no dating evidence (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 2).

Finds

Ceramic Building Material by Danielle Milbank

One small fragment of fired clay was recovered from posthole 1 (52) in trench 2. This piece of fired clay was most likely ceramic building material; however, due to its small size and the lack of any additional fragments supporting evidence for the presence of CBM on site, the information which can be extrapolated from this fragment is inconclusive.

Soil Samples

Two bulk soil samples of 10L and 5L respectively were taken from posthole 1 (52) and pit 2 (53) for environmental remains and to enhance small finds recovery. These samples were floated and sieved using a 0.25mm mesh. The sample from posthole 1 (52) yielded the single fired clay fragment mentioned above, as well as a few fragments of unidentifiable charcoal. The sample from 'pit' 2 (53) contained a few fragments of unidentifiable charcoal only.

Conclusion

The fieldwork has revealed only a few deposits of possible archaeological interest though neither contained dating evidence and their significance and chronology remain unclear.

References

BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:70, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth

Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Counc Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap **1**, Reading

Taylor, A 2010a, Kentwood Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire, An archaeological evaluation , Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 10/95, Reading

Taylor, A 2010b, Kentwood Farm, Warren House Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, An archaeological evaluation , Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 10/9b5, Reading

Appendix 1

Cut	*Fill*	*Type*	*Date*	*Dating Evidence*
1	52	Post hole?	Undated	Brick/tile
2	53	Shallow pit?	Undated	-

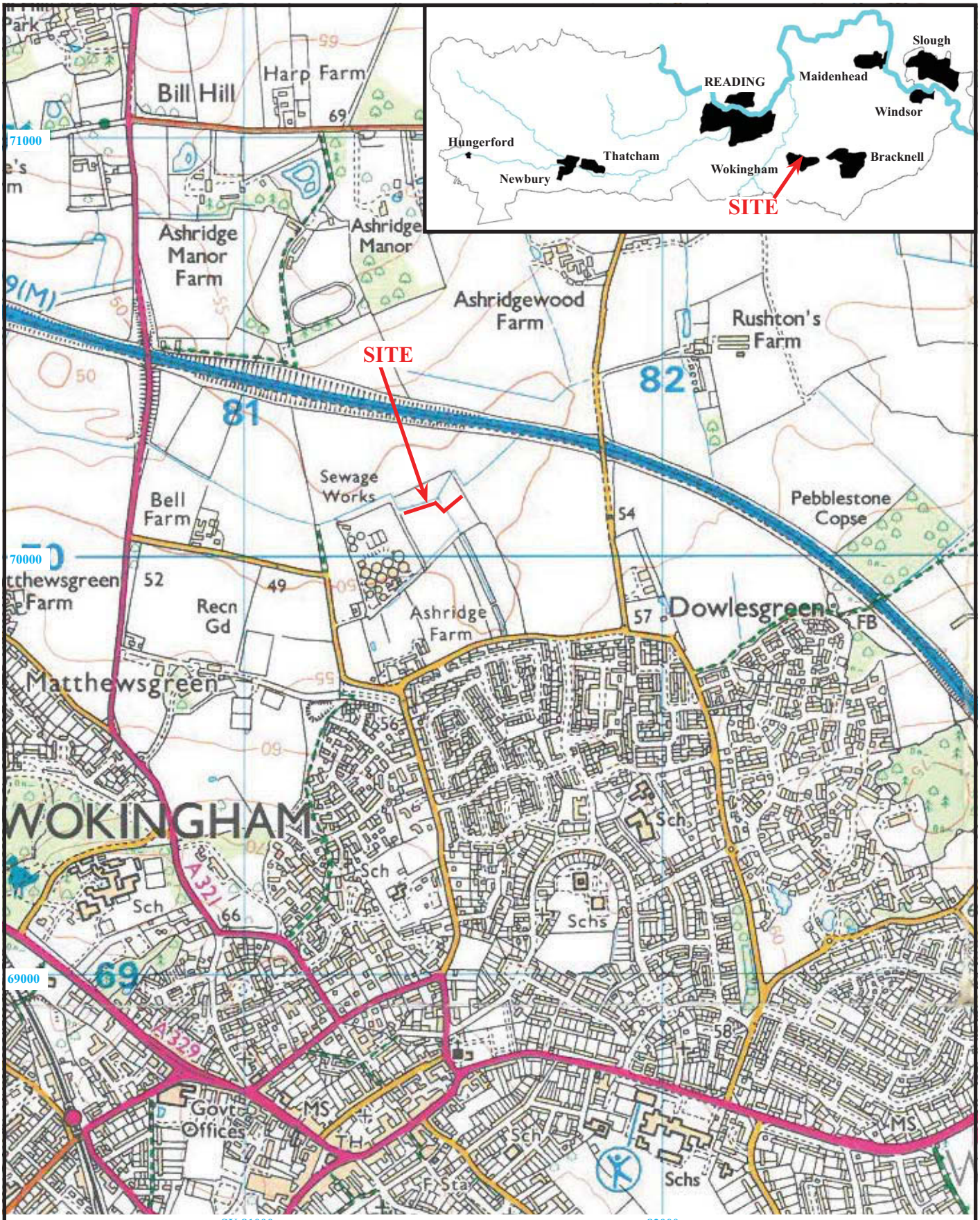

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Figure 1. Location of site within Wokingham and Berkshire.

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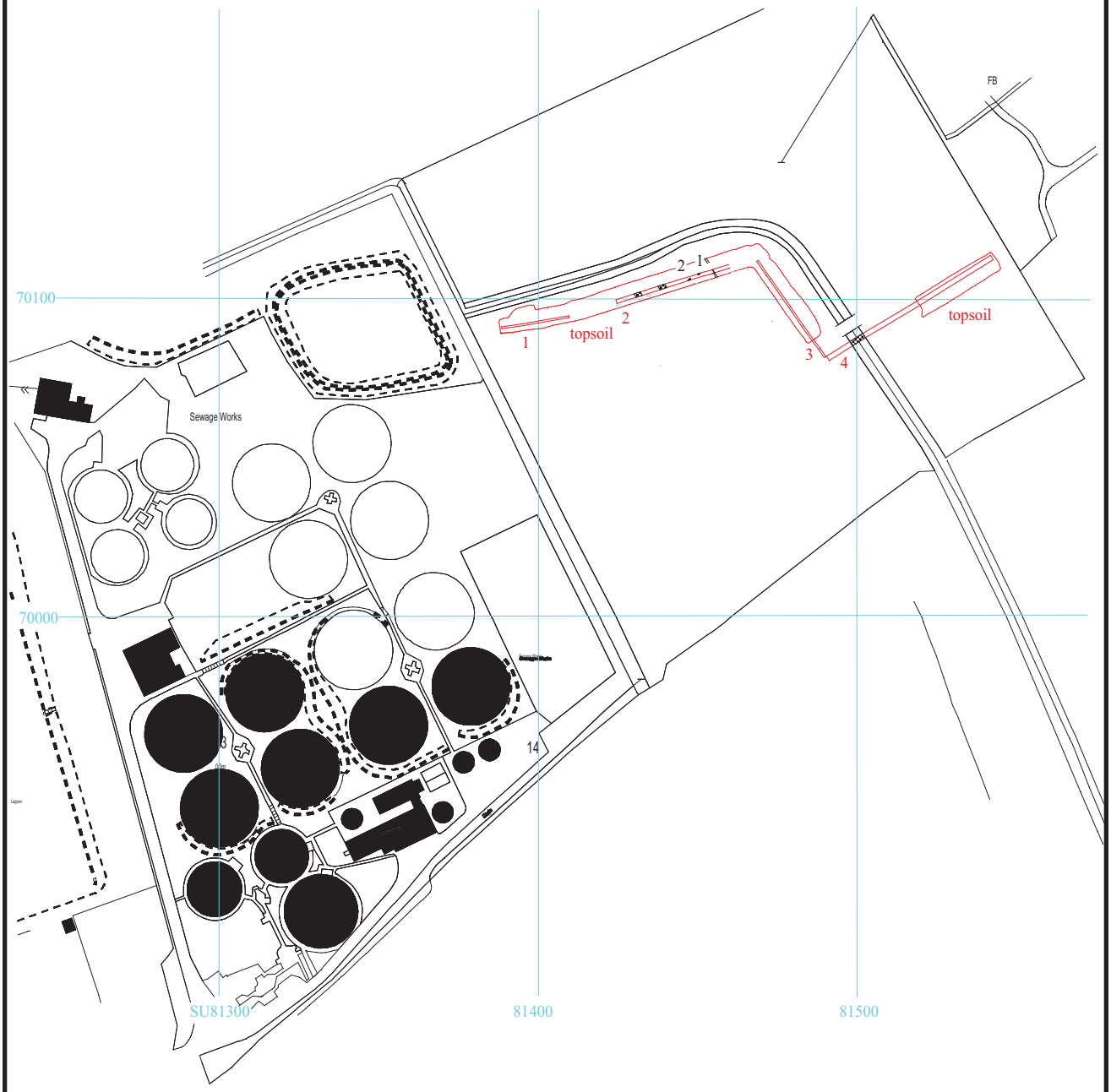

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KFW15/62 in 1 Recording Action A

0 100m

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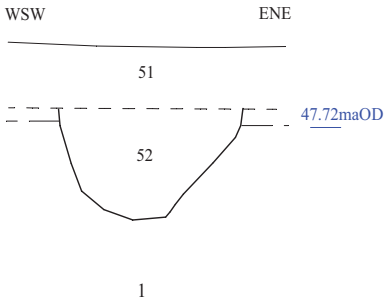

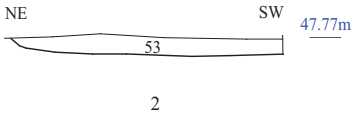

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Figure 3. Sections.

0 1m

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Plate 1. Pipe trench, looking east.

Plate 3. Posthole 1, looking north, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

Plate 2. Pit 2, looking south east, Scales: 0.5m.

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Plates 1 - 3.

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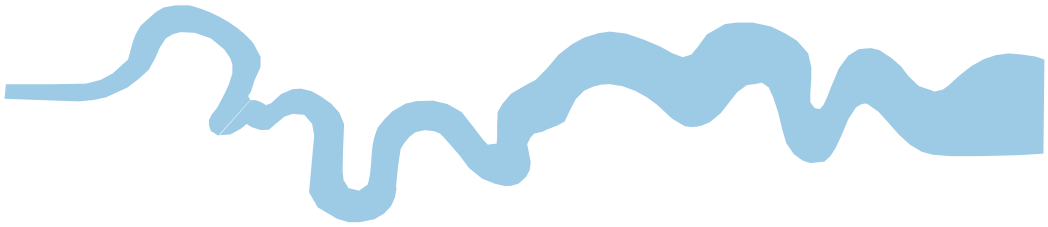
TIME CHART

	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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