Pipeline route, West Green Drive–Buckmans Road, Crawley, West Sussex

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Thames Water Utilities Limited

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CPWS05/139

January 2007

Summary

Site name: Pipeline route, West Green Drive–Buckmans Road, Crawley, West Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 265 368

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 23rd January-26th May 2006

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: CPWS 05/139

Summary of results: Two areas of topsoil stripping for contractors compound areas and two sections of pipe trench were observed. No finds or features of archaeological relevance were observed.

Monuments identified: None

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 12.01.07 Steve Preston✓ 15.01.07

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Report 05/139

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at West Green Drive-Buckmans Road, Crawley, West Sussex (TQ 265 368) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Barry Howe, Project Engineer, Thames Water UK and Ireland, Waste Water Network South London, Farm Road, Esher, Surrey, KT10 8AU.

Thames Water proposed to construct new sewers in the West Green Drive-Buckmans Road area of Crawley, West Sussex. This was to be carried out under Thames Water's statutory powers, under the terms of the *Town and Country Planning Acts (General Development Order)*. Under the Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation (Water Industry Act 1991) Thames Water is obliged to consider and mitigate the consequences of its activities. A consultation has been made with the West Sussex Archaeologist and as a consequence of this, archaeological monitoring in the form of a watching brief has been suggested as the best practice to mitigate the effects the work may have on surviving archaeological deposits.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr John Mills, Archaeologist with West Sussex County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Oram and Andy Taylor between 23rd January and 26th May 2006 and the site code is CPWS 05/139.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Crawley Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the north-western margins of Crawley and is surrounded by suburban housing with a hospital on West Green Drive. The topography is relatively flat and the pipe trench is dug through existing road surfaces. The site lies close to the junction of Weald Clay and upper Tunbridge Wells Sand (which includes clay) and is also a zone occupied by a band of alluvium (BGS 1972).

Archaeological background

The sewer route is just to the west of the town centre and in an area likely to be of archaeological interest. Many areas in and around Crawley have evidence for the production of iron from Iron Age/Roman times through to medieval and early post-medieval times, with several investigated sites on the route of the town centre relief road (Peglers Way) which lies just to the east of the present site (Saunders 1998, Hammond 2005). The pipeline route also traverses the line of an alluvial deposit and it is possible that organic remains providing evidence for palaeoenvironmental reconstruction, preserved beneath deep alluvial deposits, may be present.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the digging of the pipeline trenches and any exposed by the topsoil stripping for the compound areas.

Specific research aims were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if archaeological deposits associated with medieval or later iron production are present as for other parts of this area of Crawley.

To determine if any archaeological deposits are located in an area of alluvial deposition where organic preservation of artefacts is present and where deposits suitable for palaeoenvironmental reconstruction could be sampled.

The areas to be observed comprised those areas to be disturbed for the construction of site compounds and storage, as well as parts of the pipeline route itself .

Results

Site compounds/storage areas

Two areas, one on West Green Drive and one on Buckmans Road were designated for site compound/ material storage use (Fig. 2). These areas were stripped of topsoil by a machine fitted with a ditching bucket prior to the importation of stone to consolidate the surface. At West Green Drive, an area of *c.* 270 sq m was stripped of topsoil on the south side of the road. In fact the topsoil removal only involved stripping to a depth of no more than 0.075m and this was insufficient to expose the top of the natural geology (the archaeologically relevant

horizon). Only a modern service trench and an area of a former tree stump were observed with the disturbed topsoil.

The compound on Buckmans Road was a rectangular area of *c*. 450 sq m on the north-west side of the road. It too was stripped of 0.075m of topsoil which overlay a yellow/brown silty clay subsoil with occasional areas of the underlying yellow silty clay natural geology being exposed. Occasional pieces of iron slag (not retained) were observed within the topsoil and the brick footings of a modern structure were observed but again no archaeological deposits were noted. The overburden stripping did not cleanly expose the full extent of the archaeologically relevant horizon and thus undetected cut features could be present in this area, but no dense deposits/mounds of iron slag were present

The pipe trench

There was no intention to monitor the whole length of the pile trench digging operation as several parts of the route were located in pre-disturbed locations. However, two locations were observed in order to examine the strata where alluvial deposits might be encountered.

An area of the pipeline observed along West Green Drive was dug to a depth of 2.30m with a manhole shaft dug to a depth of 3.50m. The pipe trench was 1.9m wide and a 10m length was exposed. The stratigraphy comprised Tarmac overlying 0.5m of made ground mostly comprising brick rubble. This was overlying 0.7m of yellow/grey clay overlying a yellow sand to the base of the trench. The deeper manhole shaft revealed that the yellow sand was overlying a yellow/beige clay to a depth of 3.2m overlying a grey clay to the base of the shaft. No finds or deposits of an archaeological nature were observed.

The second area observed lay to the north on Buckmans Road. The trench was again *c*. 1.9m wide and about a 10m length was exposed. It was dug to a depth of 3.2m and the stratigraphy again comprised Tarmac overlying *c*. 0.5m of made ground overlying 0.7m of yellow/grey clay overlying yellow and yellow/beige sand overlying grey clay at the base of the trench (Fig. 3). No finds or deposits of an archaeological nature were observed.

Neither of the two pipe trenches sections observed contained any peaty or humic deposits.

Conclusion

In the area observed as part of this watching brief no archaeologically relevant finds or deposits/features were encountered. For the compound areas, one location was not stripped sufficiently deeply to allow observation of

the relevant level for archaeological deposits though such deposits if present will still survive on that site. The other compound was stripped more effectively for archaeological observation but again failed to identify any deposits of interest. A few iron slag fragments were noted within the topsoil in these places but this material is ubiquitous within the environs of Crawley and is of no archaeological significance in this instance. Neither of the two pipe trenches sections contained any obvious sources for palaeolenvironmental reconstruction.

References

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Hammond, S, 2005, 'Land off Pegler Way, Crawley, West Sussex, Draft Publication report', Thames Valley Archaeological Services project 04/90, Reading

PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

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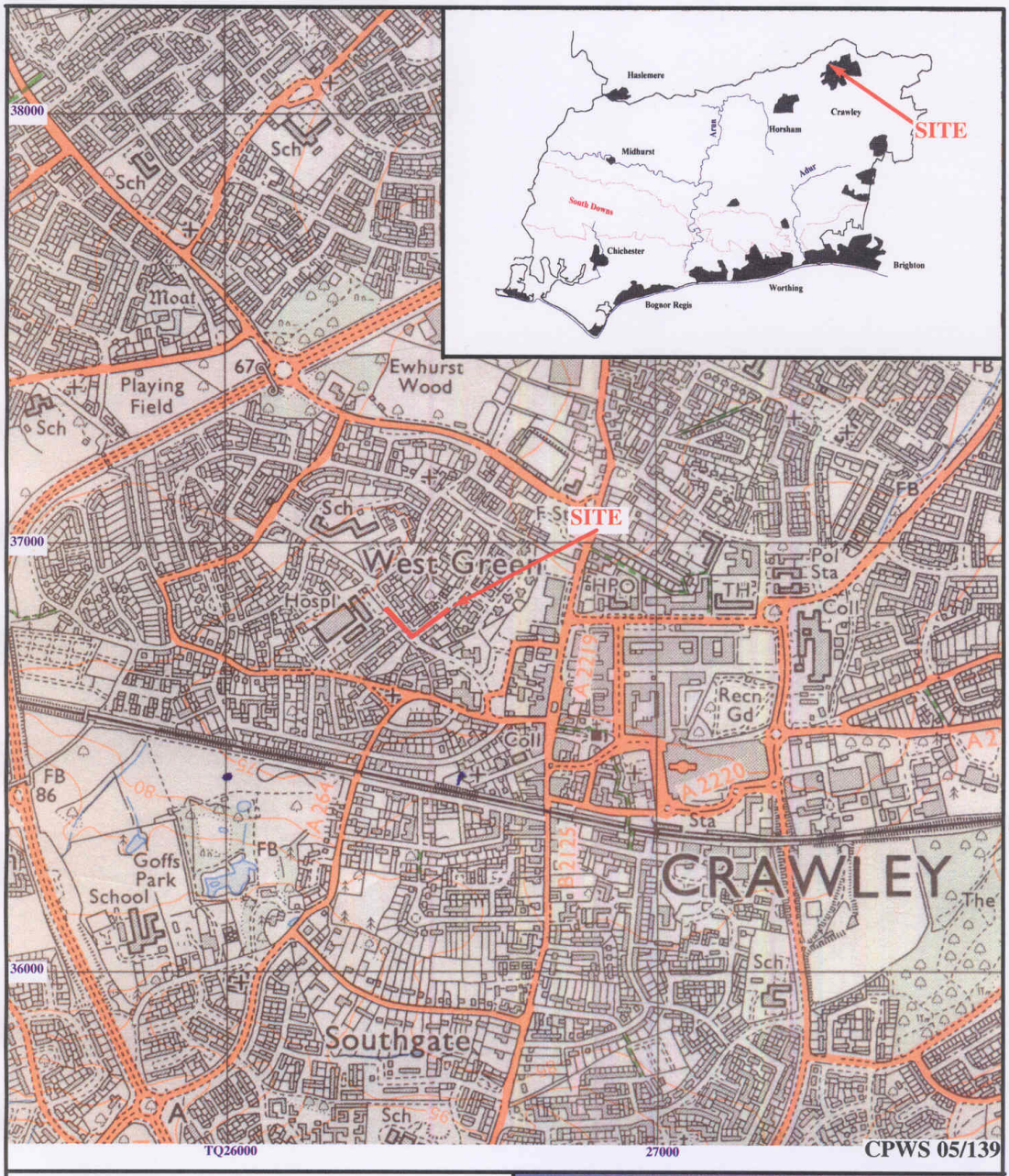

Pipeline route, West Green Drive-Buckmans Road, Crawley, West Sussex, 2006 Archaeological Watching Brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Crawley and West Sussex.

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Figure 2. Location of sites on Buckmans Road and West Green Drive.

Scale: 1:1250

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Figure 4. Representative section, West Green Drive

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