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ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**6 Roman Way, Thatcham,
West Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Lizzi Lewins and Andy Taylor

Site Code: RWT16/02

(SU 5041 6779)

6 Roman Way, Thatcham, West Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For J and M Mangan Ltd

by Lizzi Lewins and Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RWT 16/02

May 2016

Summary

Site name: 6 Roman Way, Thatcham, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 5041 6779

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 4th - 5th April 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: RWT 16/02

Summary of results: Despite the proximity of the site to a known Roman settlement no archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at the West Berkshire Museum in due course, with accession code NEBYM:2016.5.

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6 Roman Way, Thatcham, West Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Lizzi Lewins and Andy Taylor

Report 16/02

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 6 Roman Way, Thatcham, West Berkshire (SU 5041 6779) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr John Mangan of J and M Mangan Ltd, 2 Old Bath Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1QL.

Planning consent (13/00102/FULD) has been gained from West Berkshire Council for the construction of a new house at 6 Roman Way, Thatcham. The consent includes a condition (8) which requires an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during the groundworks as a result of the possibility of damage or destruction of archaeological deposits.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Alex Godden, Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council based on a briefing document prepared by Ms Sarah Orr, Acting Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Archaeology Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor on the 4th - 5th April 2016 and the site code is RWT 16/02.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at the West Berkshire Museum in due course, with accession code NEBYM:2016.5.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located north of the A4 Bath Road toward the western edge of Thatcham, on the south side of Roman Way (Figs 1 and 2). The site comprises a flat parcel of land occupied by a house and garden and lies at a height of c.80m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology is mapped as Third Terrace Thatcham Gravel (BGS 2006) and was recorded on site as mid yellow brown silty sand with frequent gravel inclusions.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a briefing document prepared by Ms Sarah Orr of West Berkshire Archaeology Service. In summary this potential stems from the location of the site within

Newtown, which is an area where an extensive Roman settlement is recorded which lies on the Roman road from Silchester to Cirencester. Fieldwork just prior to the development of Newtown in the 1930s documented elements of the Roman settlement (Harris 1930; 1937) with more recent work adding further detail including the position of the Roman road itself (Pine 2010a).

A number of more recent investigations within Thatcham have produced positive results for a range of periods. Two sites to the south-east in the Church Gate area produced evidence for Medieval occupation (Pine 2010b; Weale 2011). To the north-west at Tull Way evidence for a likely farm complex dated to the Late Iron Age/Early Roman period was discovered (Taylor 2012). Further to the west, the site of the former Turnpike School showed utilization of the landscape from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods (Pine 2010c) with further Roman occupation at Newbury Community Hospital (Simmonds 2008).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits or finds affected by the new construction. This involved the examination of areas of ground reduction and the digging of trenches for foundations or services as necessary. Any archaeological deposits that were threatened by the development were to be excavated and recorded with sufficient time allowed in the groundworkers' schedule to complete this.

Results (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1-2)

The digging of the foundation trenches was observed and measured *c.*0.70m wide and 0.55m deep (Fig. 3; Pl. 1). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of subsoil overlying the natural geology of mid yellow brown silty sand with frequent gravel (Fig. 4; Pl. 2). No topsoil was present and no archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Finds

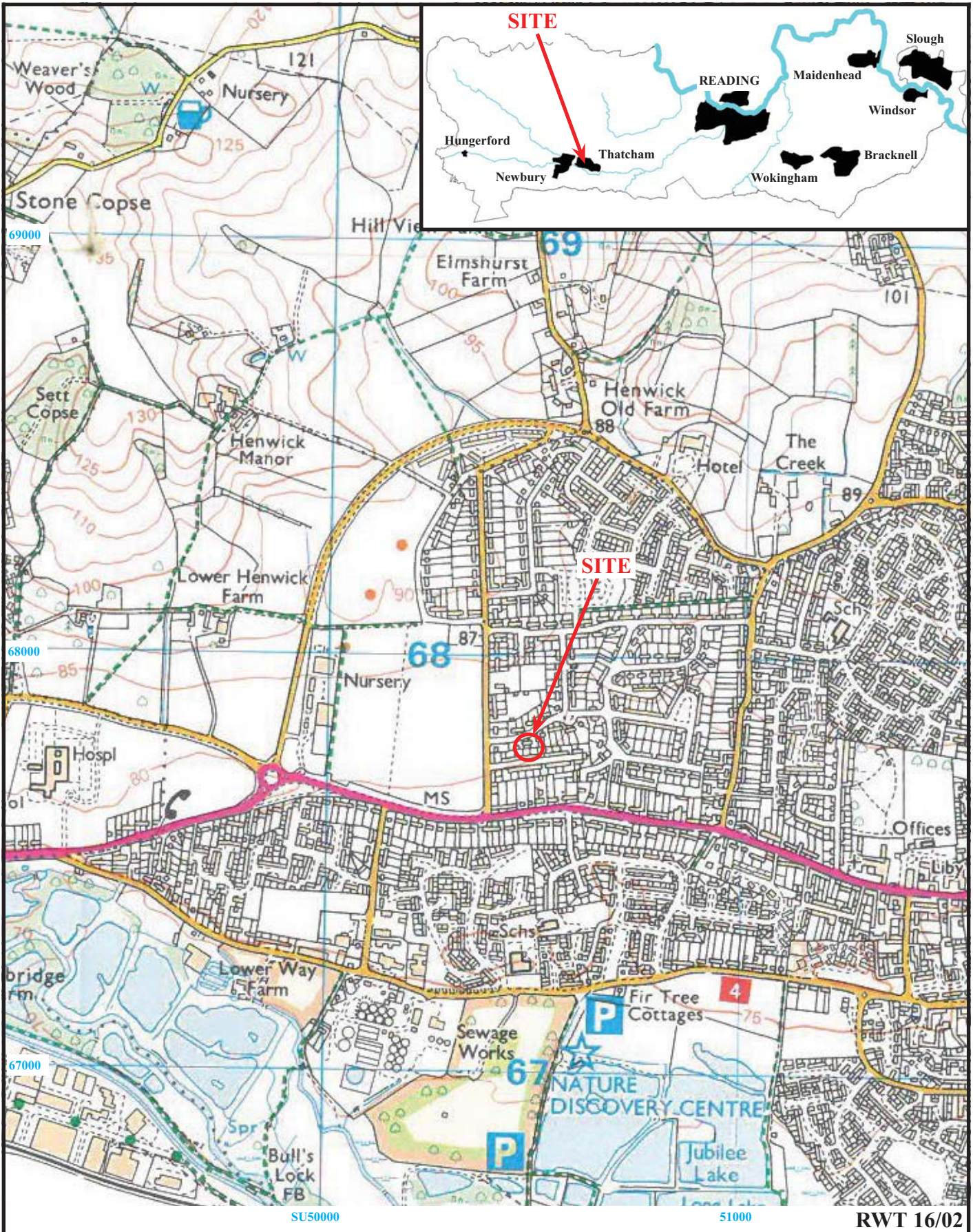
No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

Despite the proximity of the site to a known Roman settlement no archaeological features or finds were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

References

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Figure 1. Location of site within Thatcham and Berkshire.

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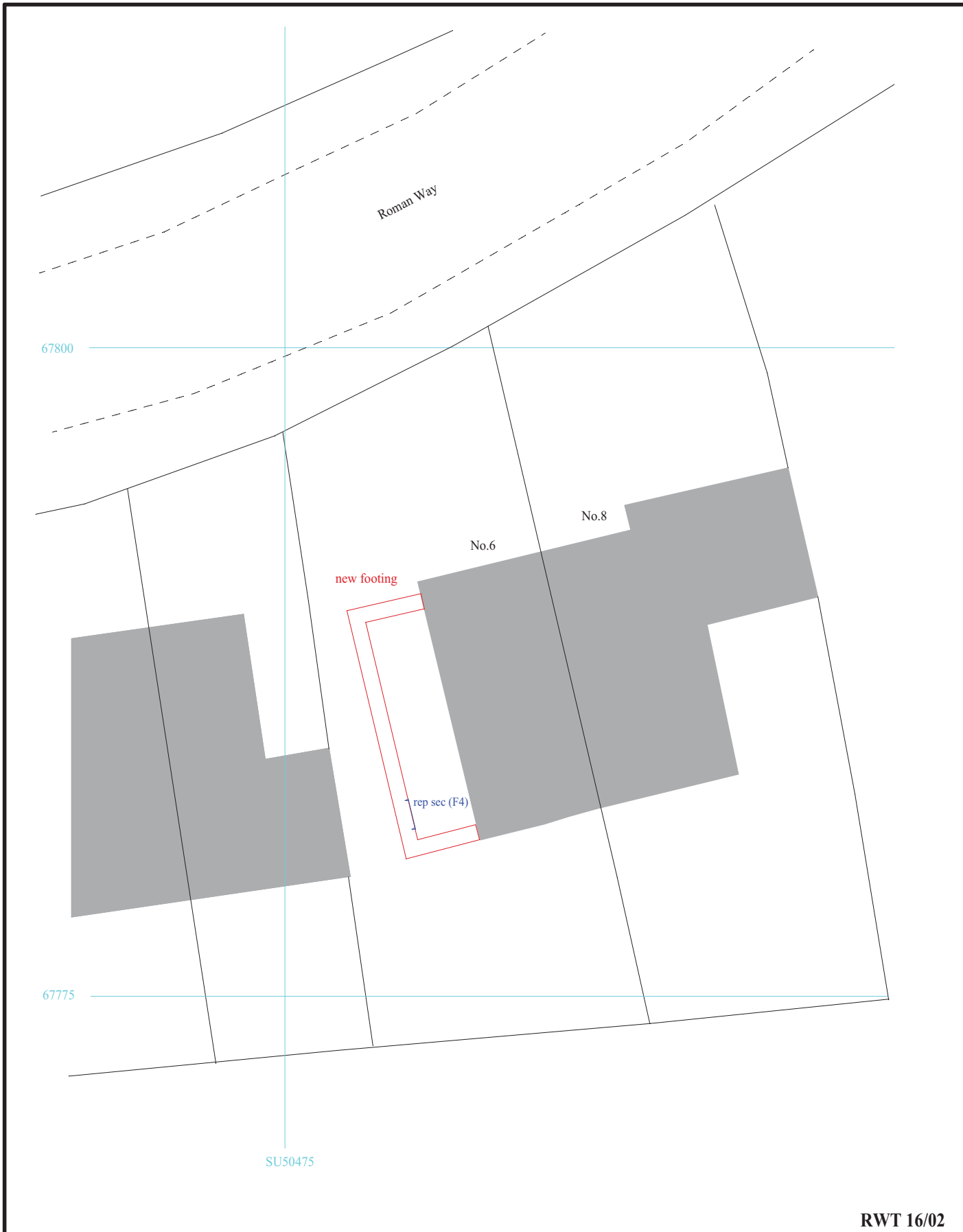


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Roman Way.

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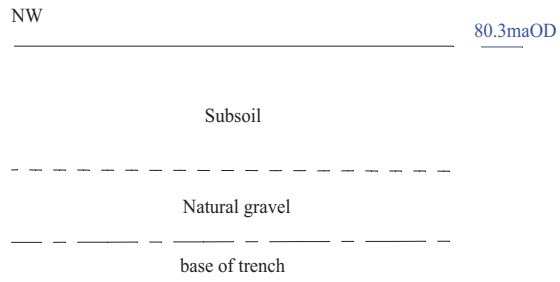


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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Foundation trench, looking northwest, Scales: horizontal 2m and vertical 0.50m.



Plate 2. Foundation trench section, southwest facing, Scales: horizontal 1m and vertical 0.50m.

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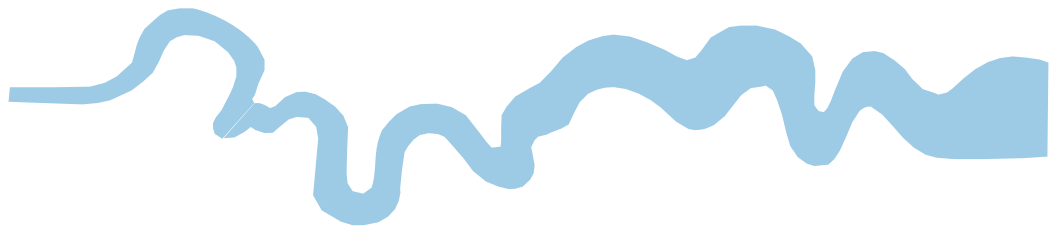
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Plates 1 - 2.

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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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**