

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**51 Cressingham Road,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Recording Action

by Danielle Milbank and Benedikt Tebbit

Site Code: CRR18/100

(SU 7267 7093)

**51 Cressingham Road, Reading,
Berkshire**

An Archaeological Recording Action

For Morningwood Ltd

by Danielle Milbank and Benedikt Tebbit

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CRR 18/100

November 2018

Summary

Site name: 51 Cressingham Road, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7267 7093

Site activity: Recording action

Date and duration of project: 20th to 24th August 2018

Project coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Benedikt Tebbit

Site code: CRR 18/100

Area of site: 500 sq m

Summary of results: The site area was stripped of overburden to expose the top of the natural geology but no archaeological features nor finds of archaeological interest were encountered.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 21.11.18 Steve Preston ✓ 21.11.18

51 Cressingham Road, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Danielle Milbank and Benedikt Tebbit

Report 18/100

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 51 Cressingham Road, Reading, Berkshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Daniel Lewis, on behalf of Morningwood Ltd, 94 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham Park Village, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 6PP.

Planning permission (171231) has been gained from Reading Borough Council for the construction of a new house following demolition of an existing building at 51 Cressingham Rd, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7267 7093). Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, a condition (6) has been attached to the consent requiring that a programme of archaeological investigation be carried out.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Borough council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Ellie Leary of Berkshire Archaeology, who advise the council on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Benedikt Tebbit between the 20th and 24th August 2018 and the site code is CRR18/100.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south side of Cressingham Road, which is aligned east-west and lies *c.*2.5km to the south of the centre of Reading, on high ground in a largely residential area (Fig. 1). The site comprises a detached house (now demolished) set within a garden (Fig. 2). The site is bounded to the north by Cressingham Road, with Birdhill Avenue to the east, and to the west and south are detached houses set in gardens. The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay, locally capped by 6th terrace gravel: no gravel was observed in the stripped area and only the London Clay was revealed. The site is at a height of approximately 75m above Ordnance Datum on steeply sloping ground down to the floor of the Kennet Valley to the west,

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing document produced by Ms Ellie Leary formerly of Berkshire Archaeology. In summary, this potential stems from the site's location on the side of the valley of the River Kennet/Foudry Brook. This is a location from which several sites and finds have now been recorded, especially on the edge of the valley to the east. In particular on Northcourt Avenue field evaluation located residual finds of Roman pottery, a medieval ditch and undated postholes (Ford and Pine 1998) and excavation (Milbank 2010) revealed an early Roman occupation site. Recent fieldwork revealed further Middle Bronze Age occupation (Ford 2018). Iron Age pottery and Roman ditches were also recorded to the east (Carlsson 2010) and a Roman cremation burial to the north but evaluation at Windermere Road to the north-east revealed nothing of interest (Ford 2010). Recent excavation at Ridgeway School to the south-east has also revealed Middle/Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age and Early Roman occupation (Ford 2017). Excavation to the north at Reading Girls School also revealed further Bronze Age occupation (HA 2016). The unexplained monument known (in the archaeological literature) as Marshall's Hill which lies to the north-east is possibly a Late Bronze Age ringfort (high status enclosure?) (Bradley 1984).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the recording action was to excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the development, to produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site, to establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic, etc, and to produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

Additional research aims were to establish the palaeoenvironmental setting of the area, and if relevant to establish when the site was first utilised and when was it abandoned.

A rectangular area corresponding to the new house footprint was to be stripped of overburden down to the top of the archaeologically relevant level, here expected to be the top of the natural, using a JCB-type or 360 type excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Any possible features or deposits of an archaeological nature were to be cleaned using hand tools, and any features encountered were to be excavated and recorded.

Results

The area was stripped as intended, to the top of the natural geology throughout the recording action area (Fig. 2; Pl. 1). This was carried out in two portions, under continuous archaeological supervision.

The natural geology encountered consisted of a compact fine clay with a mottled light grey brown colour (London Clay). Very occasional flint inclusions were present. A mixture of concrete, modern construction rubble and partially truncated dark grey-brown clay silt (disturbed topsoil or subsoil) directly overlay the natural clay. Frequent concrete, brick and ceramic fragments were present in the latter deposit, which represents a heavily rooted and disturbed topsoil. A linear band of redeposited natural clay was observed aligned approximately NW–SE in the south-western corner of the stripped area (Pl. 2). This also contained modern brick fragments and represents further disturbance of the natural clay geology.

Finds

No finds were recovered in the course of the recording action.

Conclusion

A rectangular area was stripped in accordance with the project specification. The majority of this area was covered in concrete, with topsoil and subsoil having largely been previously removed. Where the remains of a possible subsoil deposit was identified, it was disturbed and contained modern debris. The underlying clay geology was observed throughout the area. Potential therefore remained for archaeological features or deposits to have survived, but none were encountered. Some truncation of the natural geology was observed, in the form of a modern linear feature. No artefacts or other archaeological material were encountered during this recording action.

References

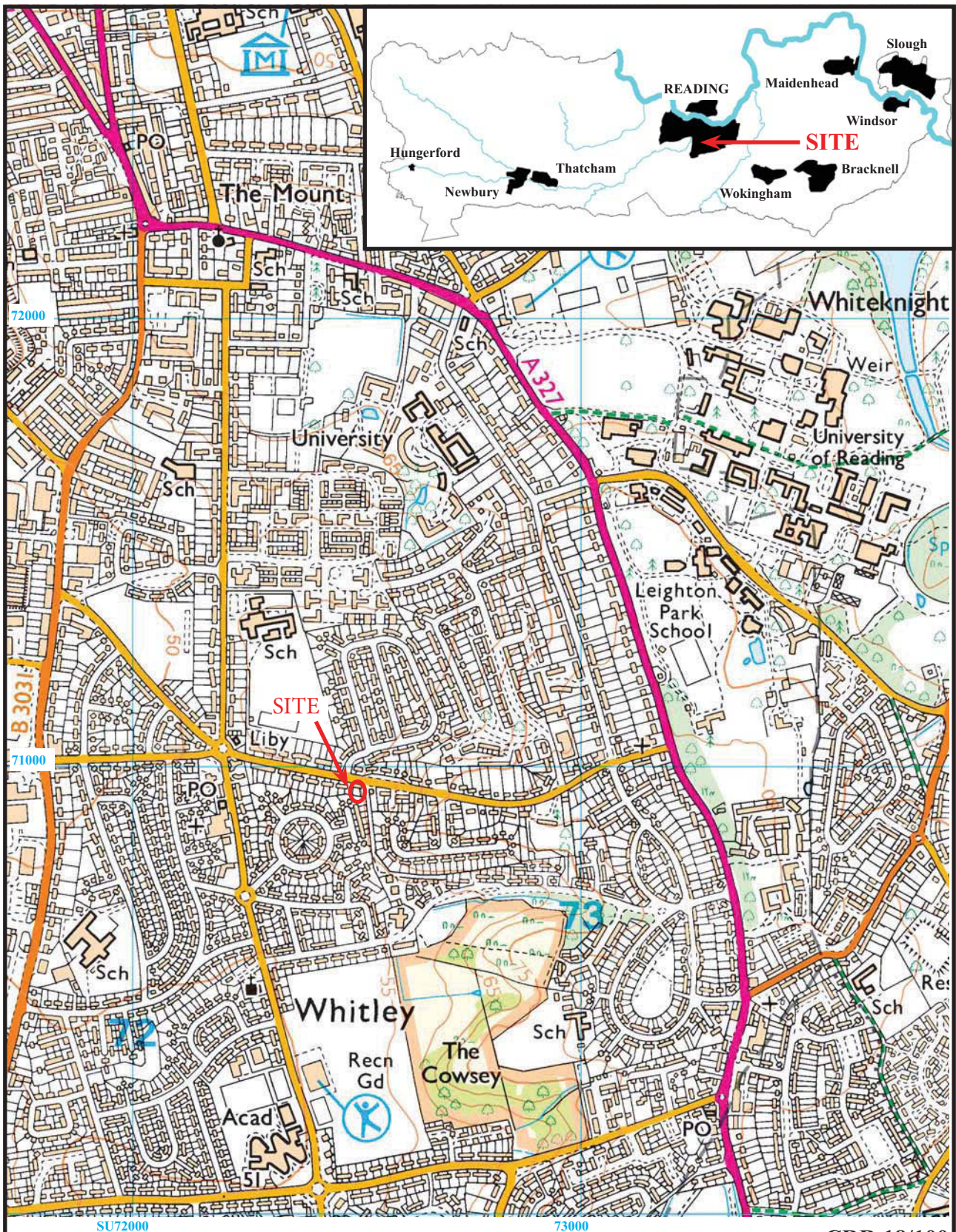
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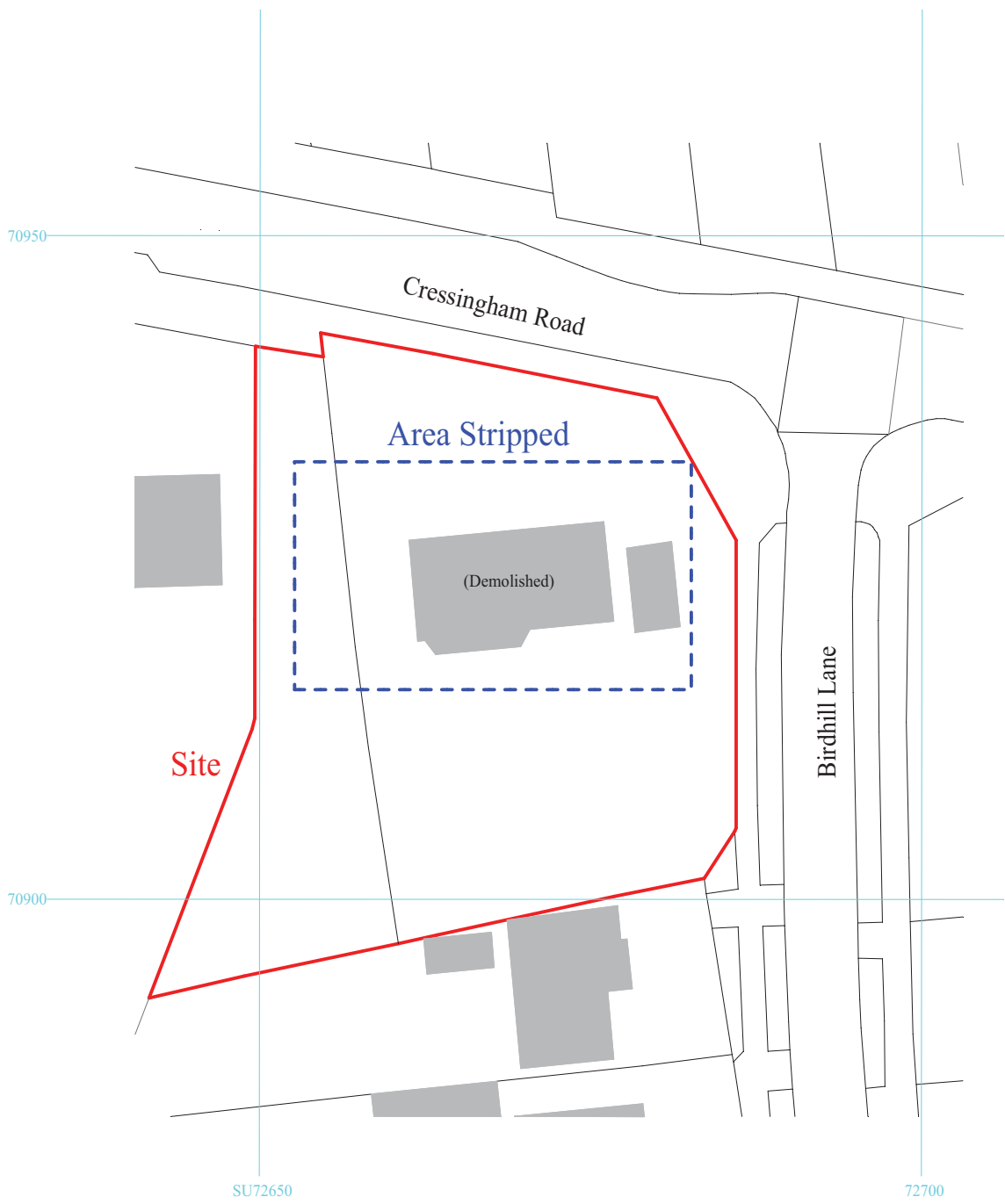
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Figure 1. Location of site in Reading and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of stripped area



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Plate 1. Recording action area, looking South, Scale: 1m



Plate 2. Recording action area, looking South, Scale: 1m.

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**51 Cressingham Road, Reading, Berkshire
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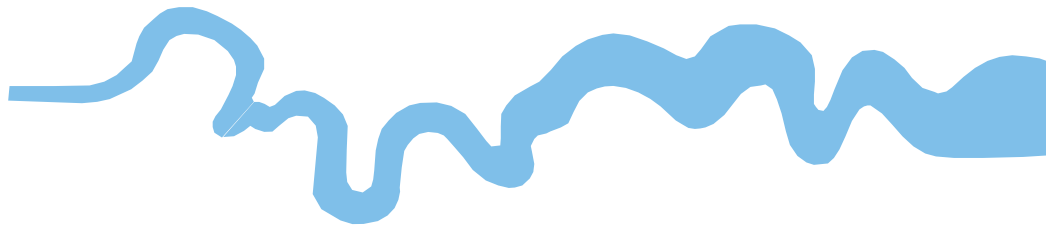
Plates 1 and 2.

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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 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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