

**356 Maplin Park, Langley,
Slough, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For George Wimpey West London Ltd**

by Tim Dawson and
James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code MPL 08/66

November 2009

Summary

Site name: 356 Maplin Park, Langley, Slough, Berkshire

Grid reference: TQ 0180 7974

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 8th July to 20th August 2009

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson

Site code: MPL 08/66

Area of site: 0.35 ha

Summary of results: No finds or features of archaeological interest were encountered. Areas of the site had been disturbed by previous development on the site

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

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356 Maplin Park, Langley, Slough, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

By Tim Dawson and James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 08/66b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 356 Maplin Park, Langley, Slough, Berkshire TQ 0180 7974 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Bill Luck of George Wimpey West London, Stratfield House, Station Road, Hook, Hants, RG27 9QP.

A planning consent (P/01637/036) has been granted by Slough Borough Council to construct new housing on land at 356 Maplin Park. The consent is subject to a condition (3) relating to archaeology, which states ‘An archaeological watching brief is required to mitigate the impact of development and ensure preservation ‘by record’ of any surviving remains. This is to be undertaken as the provisional stage of a phased programme of works should initial investigations warrant further mitigation’. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary O’Donoghue, Archaeological Officer at Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson, Andrew Taylor, Steve Ford and James Lewis between 8th July and 20th August 2009 and the site code is MPL 08/66. The archaeological potential of the site had previously been considered by a desk-based assessment (Ford 2008).

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located immediately south of the London-Reading main line railway in Langley in the east of Slough and is surrounded by urban development (Figs 1 and 2). The site is levelled, open land, at a height of approximately 25m above Ordnance Datum. The site is mapped as lying on Quaternary (Drift) River Terrace Deposits of Brickearth of Taplow Age (BGS 1981); silty and gravelly clay (brickearth) was observed in this investigation.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Ford 2008). In summary the site lies in an area with only a modest amount of previously recorded archaeology despite its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley and proximity to the similarly rich Colne Valley (Ford 1987; 2008). A small number of prehistoric artefacts are recorded from the general area of the site such as a barbed and tanged flint arrowhead and flint flake, a bronze dirk and several Palaeolithic flint tools. For the historic period, a bronze fragment from a Roman horse fitting and a medieval deer park and manor house/hunting lodge are known.

Nearby areas had been quarried for brickearth in the early 20th century with the quarry facilities adjacent to the site and a tramway traversing the site. However, the geotechnical data obtained for this project seemed to indicate the presence of a moderate thickness of brickearth suggesting the possibility that the archaeologically relevant level (top of the natural geology) may be in-situ albeit buried beneath made ground.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. 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

The excavation of a cable trench and the excavation of footings for a number of plots were observed (Fig. 3). The topsoil and subsoil had been heavily disturbed by made ground, which extended in areas to a depth of 1.2m. The silty and gravelly clay natural geology typically began at a depth between 0.24–0.55m.

Cable Easement

The trench was 0.7m deep, 0.45m wide and approximately 120m in length (Fig. 4). No features of archaeological interest were encountered. At the north-west corner of the site the topsoil of 0.24m depth was directly above the natural geology of brickearth. Towards the south of the site there was a band of grey/brown silty clay subsoil/made ground (with brick rubble) of 0.25m depth above the natural geology. The topsoil and subsoil had been previously disturbed through levelling and made ground.

Plots 1 and 2 and 3-8

Footings were dug 0.50m wide to a depth of 1.1m. Rubble made ground extended 0.4m in depth from the surface. Between 0.4-0.55m was a silty clay subsoil(?). The natural geology comprising gravelly clay began at 0.55m depth. The topsoil and subsoil had been disturbed through levelling and the dumping of made ground. No features of archaeological interest were encountered.

Plots 9 and 10

The footing trenches were 1.7m deep. Rubble made ground extended 1.2m from the surface where the natural gravelly brickearth began. The topsoil and subsoil had been disturbed through levelling and the dumping of made ground. No features of archaeological interest were encountered.

Plots 11, 12, 13

The footings trenches were c. 1m deep. Made ground consisting mainly of brick rubble extended from the surface to a depth of 0.36m. The natural geology consisting of silty clay extended beyond a depth of 0.36m. No features of archaeological interest were encountered. The topsoil and subsoil had been disturbed through levelling and dumping of made ground.

Plots 14- 25

Plots 14-25 mostly lay within an area which was formerly occupied by a railway embankment and this area had been much more extensively disturbed than elsewhere on the site. Made ground consisting mainly of brick rubble and soil to varying depths of 0.3-0.5m remained above a rutted natural geology consisting of silty clay. No features of archaeological interest were encountered.

Access road, carparking and garden areas

The remainder of the development groundwork components comprised the creation of an access road, carparking and garden areas. All of these were of superficial depth relative to the greater thickness of made ground already demonstrably present on the site, and were thus not monitored.

Finds

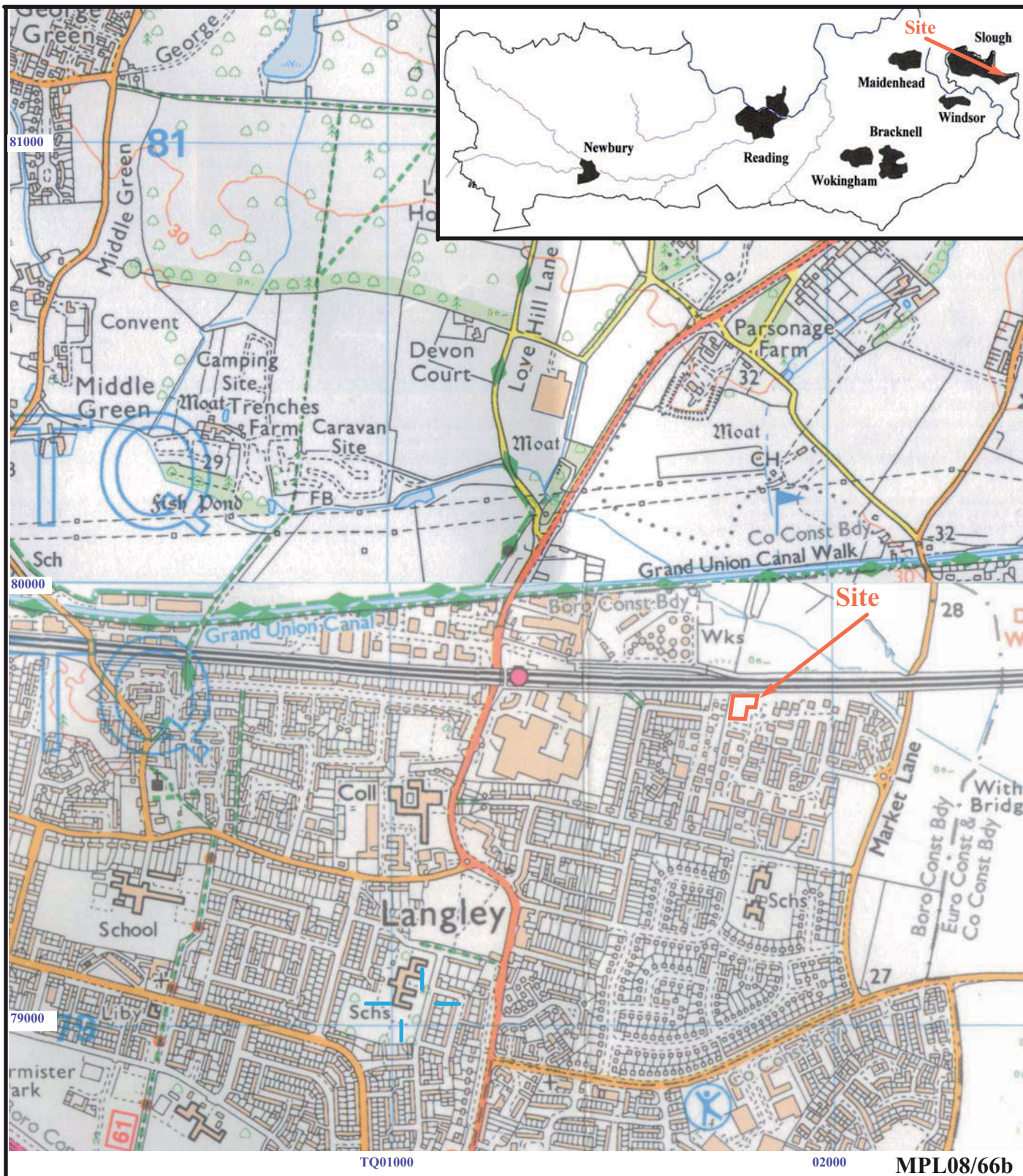
No finds of archaeological interest were discovered.

Conclusion

No finds or features of archaeological interest were discovered. Despite the initial possibility of moderate preservation in-situ of the archaeologically relevant levels on the site, previous levelling and embankment construction caused significant disturbance to the natural geology. Also, despite these site observations it is still not known if the area had already been truncated during quarrying for brickearth in the early 20th century.

References

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1: 50,000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
- Ford, S, 2008, '356 Maplin Park, Langley, Slough, Berkshire, archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 08/66, Reading
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

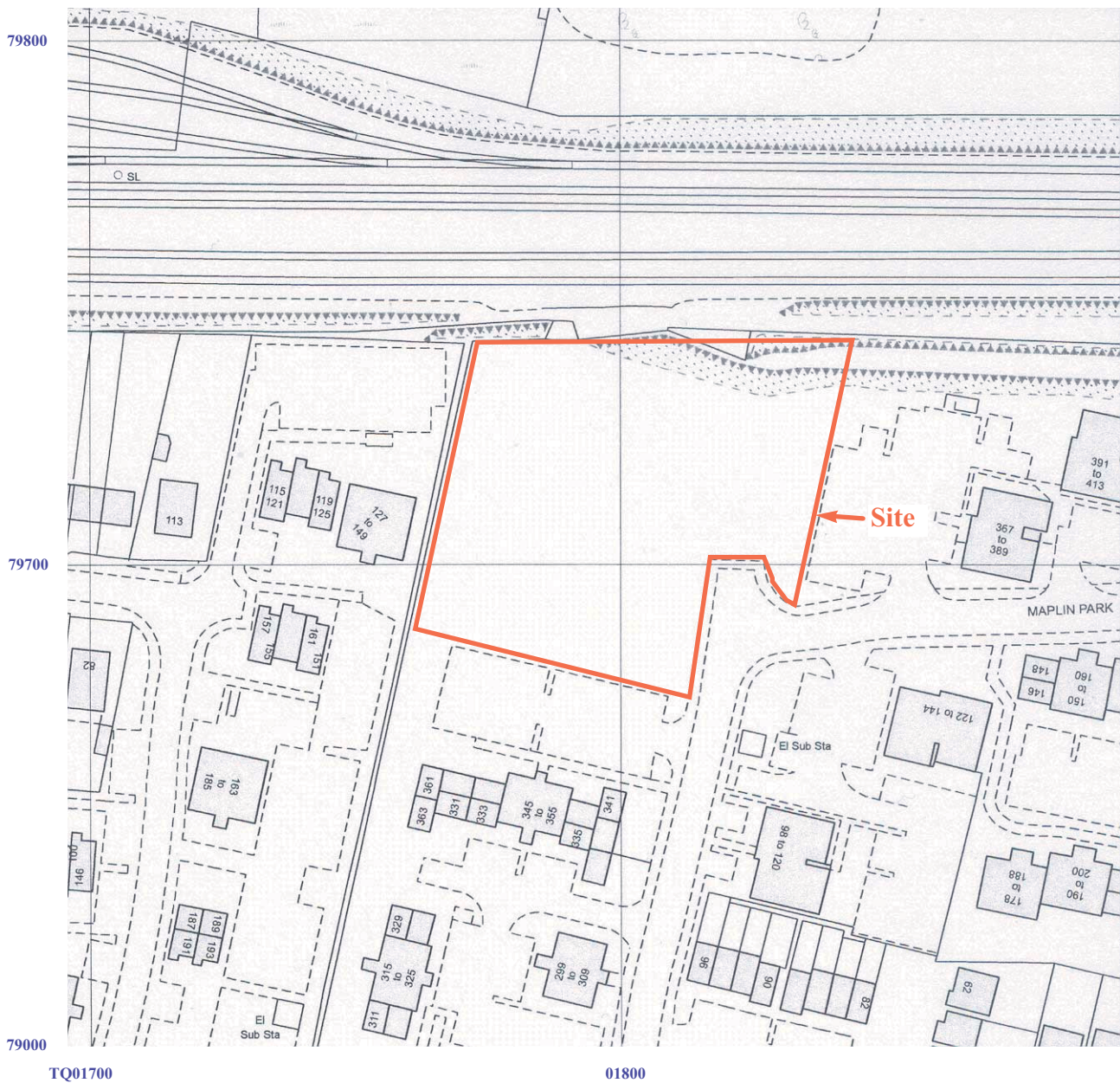


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Archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Langley and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site in Maplin Park

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Figure 3. Location of Footings

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Figure 4. Representative Sections