

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land off Ashley Road, Coley,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by
Tim Dawson and James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: ARC09/116

(SU 7021 7233)

Land off Ashley Road, Coley, Reading, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Emkat Developments Ltd

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

Site Code ARC 09/116

July 2010

Summary

Site name: Land off Ashley Road, Coley, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7021 7233

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 8th - 13th June 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: ARC 09/116

Area of site: c.0.22ha

Summary of results: No finds or features of archaeological interest were identified

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 09.07.10
	Steve Preston ✓ 08.07.10

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Report 09/116

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at land off Ashley Road, Coley, Reading (SU 7021 7233) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Kevin Moore, of Emkat Developments Ltd, 3 Hemdean Hill, Caversham, Berkshire, RG4 7SB.

A planning consent (08/01732/FUL) has been granted by Reading Borough Council subject to a condition which requires the implementation of an archaeological watching brief.

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 for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough no matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Natasha Bennett and James McNicoll-Norbury between 8th–13th June 2010 and the site code is ARC09/116.

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 at the end of Ashley Road cul-de-sac in the Coley area south-west of the centre of Reading, (Fig. 2). The site is currently a vacant plot of land in an area of housing. Immediately to the south stands Berkshire Independent Hospital and c.200m to the west runs the Reading to Basingstoke railway line. Topographically, the site is flat and with an artificial slope where the driveway leads in from the north. The underlying geology is described as Plateau Gravel (BGS 1946), more specifically Henley Road Terrace gravels (Wymer 1968), which was seen on site as an orange gravelly clay. The site is at a height of c.55m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the margins of the archaeologically rich Kennet Valley with a wide variety of sites and finds recorded, particularly dating from the Roman period (Lobb

and Rose 1996). A number of Roman coins are recorded nearby. To the south-east, Saxon pottery and preserved wood are recorded in the former course of the Holy Brook (Terry 1997). Recent evaluation to the south-east revealed a single prehistoric flint flake but no archaeological deposits (Colls 2006).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved the monitoring of foundation trench digging for the new structures. Other intrusive groundworks such as ground reduction were also be examined as necessary if they were of sufficient depth to impact on the archaeologically relevant levels.

A mini-digger was used to reduce the ground around both plots (Pl. 1) and to dig the footing trenches (Pl. 2). The footing trenches were 0.60m wide and 1.50m deep. The removal of material by the machine and the resulting spoil heaps were monitored closely for finds of archaeological interest.

Results

A mini-digger was used to reduce the ground around both plots (Pl. 1) and to dig the footing trenches (Pl. 2). The footing trenches were 0.60m wide and 1.50m deep. The removal of material by the machine and the resulting spoil heaps were monitored closely for finds of archaeological interest.

Plot 1

The area of ground to be occupied by Plot 1 was reduced by 0.45m before the footing trenches were dug (Pl. 1). The trenches were excavated between 0.90m and 0.60m inside the boundary of the reduced area and each trench was 0.60m wide and 1.50m deep. The stratigraphy exposed comprised 0.20m of topsoil and 0.45m of subsoil overlying the orange gravelly clay natural geology (Pl. 2). No finds or features of archaeological interest were identified in this area.

Plot 2

Plot 2 was reduced by 0.25m prior to the footings being dug. As with Plot 1, the footing trenches were 0.60m wide and 1.5m deep though the trenches along its southern edge were 1.8m wide to accommodate a bay window and outshot. The stratigraphy observed in the footing trenches was the same as that seen in Plot 1, 0.20m topsoil, 0.45m subsoil and orange gravelly clay. Plot 2 also yielded no finds or features of archaeological interest.

Finds

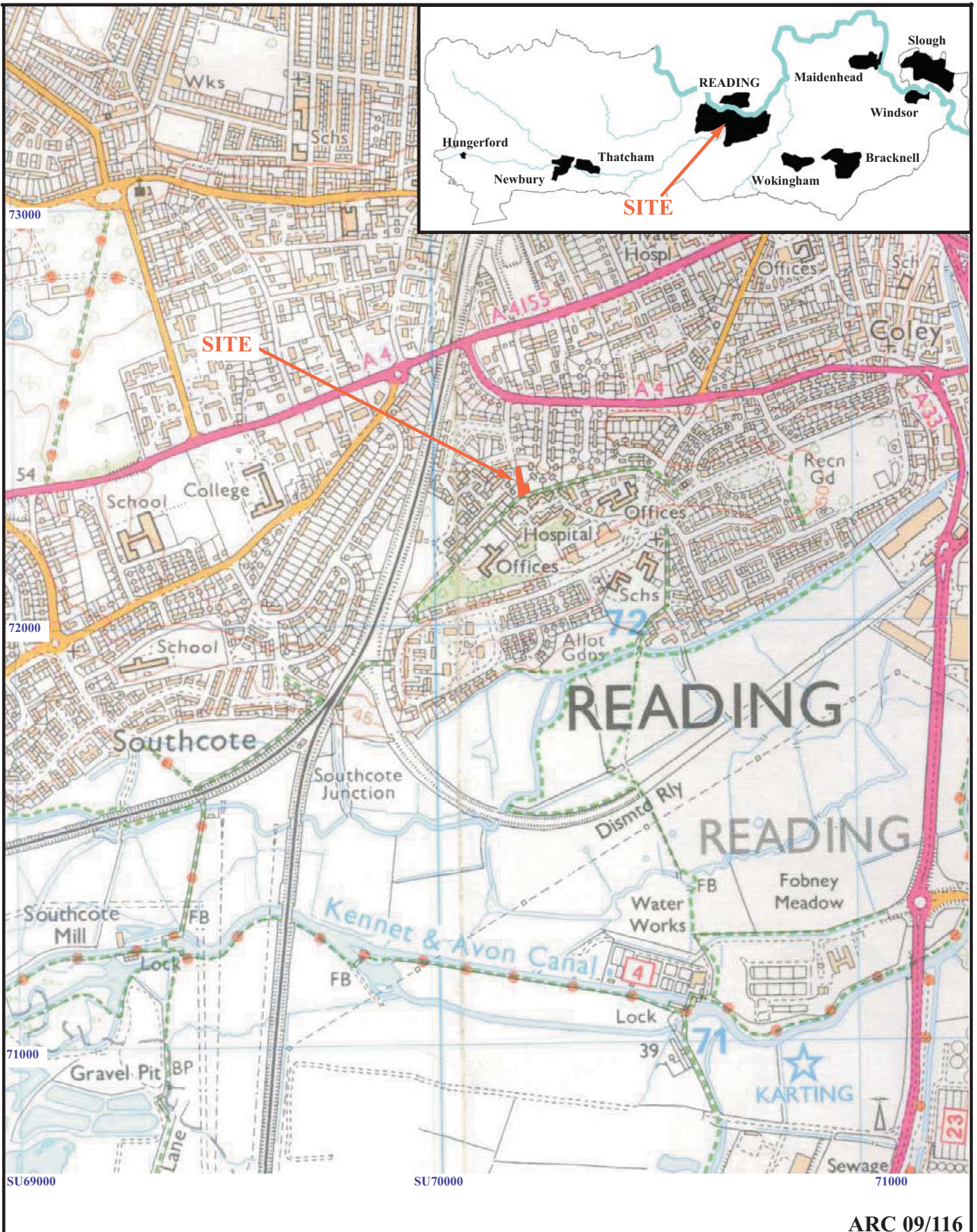
No finds were recovered from this site.

Conclusion

During the course of the watching brief, the reduction of the ground level and digging of the foundation trenches were observed. No finds or features of archaeological interest were identified in these groundworks.

References

- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:633360, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
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- Lobb, S J and Rose, P G, 1996, *Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley, Berkshire*, Wessex Archaeol Rep **9**, Salisbury
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich
- Terry, J, 1997, 'Coley Park Farm', in J Hawkes and P J Fasham (eds), *Excavations on Reading Waterfront Sites, 1978–1988*, Wessex Archaeol Rep **5**, Salisbury, 59–61
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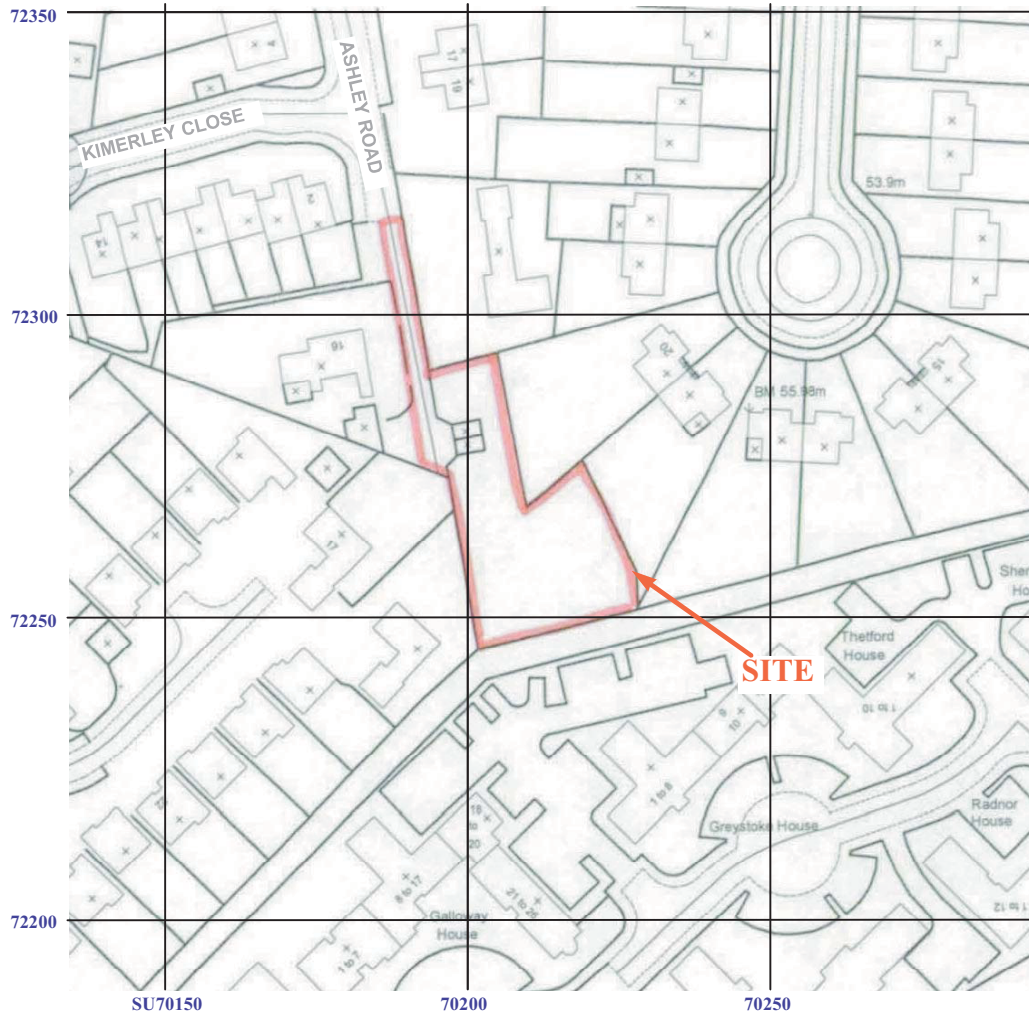
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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Ashley Road.

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Figure 3. Detail of areas observed during watching brief.



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Plot1

Topsoil

Subsoil
(grey sandy clay with gravel)

Orange gravelly clay (natural geology)

Base of foundation trench

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Figure 4. Representative Section.

0 1m

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Plate 1. Plot 1 area strip, looking south.



Plate 2. Plot 1, typical area of footing trench, looking west.

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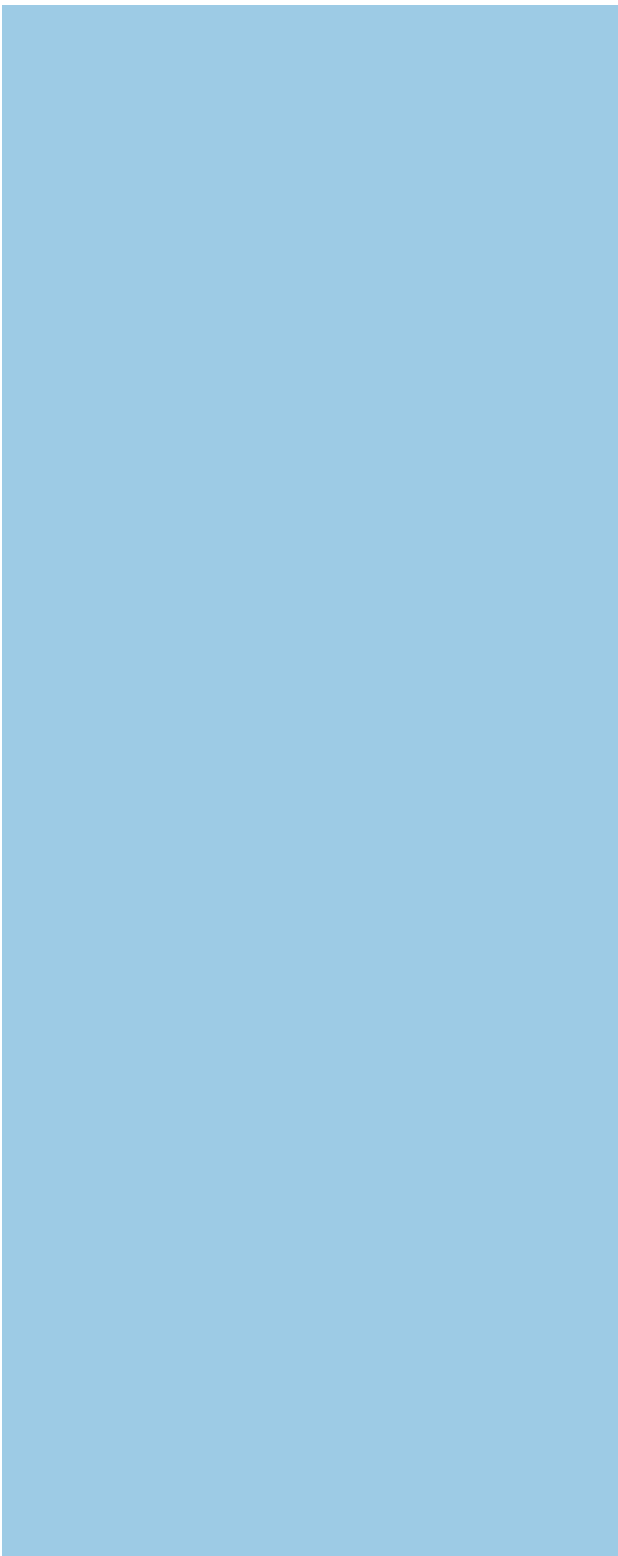
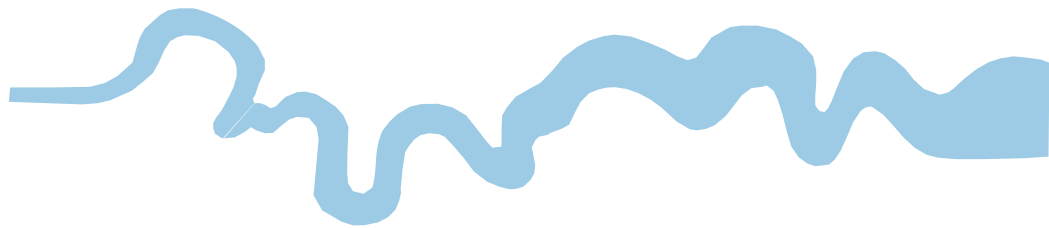
Plates 1 and 2

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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
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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