



WILSON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Wilson Road
Reading

County of Berkshire

A report on the archaeological strip, map and sample investigation

July 2012



**Wilson Primary School
Wilson Road
Reading
RG30 2 RW**

BR-WPW12

A report on the archaeological strip, map and sample investigation

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Summary (non-technical).

This report has been commissioned by Project Services Hampshire County Council in order to record and assess the results of a strip, map and sample investigation carried out at Wilson Primary School, Reading.

Work to upgrade the school playing field was monitored during six site visits made between 11/06/2012 and 20/06/2012.

No confirmed archaeological deposits were recorded in the excavation area. Natural ground was observed between 47m and 51m OD.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The strip, map and sample investigation brief took place at Wilson Primary School, Wilson Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2RW, hereafter called 'the site'. The site comprises an existing school playing field, car park, and trees and is bounded by Tofrek Terrace to the east, the gardens and residential properties fronting Westbourne Terrace to the south, Beacham Road to the west, and August End to the north. The centre of the site lies at National Grid reference 469219 173469 (see Fig 1). Modern pavement level near to the site varies from c 50m OD at the north end of the site, rising to 61m OD at the southern end.

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Method Statement* which formed the project design for the strip, map and sample investigation (see Section 1.2, MOLA, 2012).

1.3 Planning background

The strip, map and sample investigation was carried out in response to an archaeological planning condition Ref No.11/01936/REG3 on the planning permission for the redevelopment.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Project Services Hampshire on behalf of the client, Reading Borough Council, and produced by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

The purpose of the strip, map and sample investigation was to determine whether archaeological remains or features were present on the site and, if so, to record the nature and extent of such remains. A number of more site-specific research aims and objectives were established in the preceding *Method Statement* and are outlined in the following section.

The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the excavation against the original research aims, and to suggest what further work, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The purpose of this strip, map and sample investigation is to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource.

The archaeological brief is essentially to carry out/monitor the ground reduction and sample excavate all archaeological features uncovered in conjunction with an agreed approach with Berkshire Archaeology (archaeological advisors to the local planning authority) in order to establish the levels and nature of surviving archaeological deposits, prior to the redevelopment of the site. A few broad research questions can be outlined:

- What is the nature and level of natural topography?
- What are the earliest deposits identified?
- What are the latest deposits identified?
- Is there any evidence of occupation or activity on the site associated with the prehistoric remains found in the general area, and particularly those Palaeolithic and Bronze Age remains uncovered at Grovelands Pit to the south of the site?
- Is there any evidence of occupation or activity relating to the Roman period, as demonstrated by the isolated finds of a Roman potsherd at Battle abbey, and stray coin finds at Grovelands and at Becham Road to the west?
- Is there any evidence of Saxon activity relating to the spearhead that was recorded at 57 Kent Road, to the east of the site?



Fig 1 Site location

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

The site is located to the west of Tofrek Terrace, in an area to the south of the Oxford Road. The site is currently an open area laid to grass. The underlying geology is described as plateau gravel (BGS 1946), which has been reclassified as Lynch Hill terrace (Wymer 1968, 77; 1999, map 6). Topographically, the site lies on the slope of the valley side of the Thames where the ground rises from c 50m OD at the north end of the site, to c 61m OD at the southern end.

2.2 Prehistoric

Prehistoric flint flakes and a core (Ref. MRM15839) have been recovered in the general area. Flint flakes (Ref. 01719.00.000) were recovered at 108 Tilehurst Road, 635m to the southeast of the site (SU 696 730). A flint blade (Ref. 01718.00.000) was recorded at the junction of Cranbury Road and Tilehurst Road (SU 69680 73010) 635m to the southeast of the site.

Grovelands Pit 450m south of the site has produced a prolific array of finds including a mammoth tusk(s), a rhinoceros bone, and molars from a straight tusked elephant. Human artefacts include a possible Palaeolithic flint scatter and parts of six Bronze Age urns and burnt wood

A total of 16 superbly-made pointed hand-axes in near mint condition were obtained in 1903-4 from McIlroy's brickyard. The hand-axes came 'from a mixture of clay and gravel on the very western edge of the Lynch Hill Terrace.

2.3 Roman

One sherd of unstratified pottery was recovered during an archaeological evaluation at Battle Abbey by Thames Valley Archaeological Services in 1996. This was located 500m to the north east of the present site.

Roman finds were recovered at Grovelands Park Brick Works (Ref. 01676.00.000) comprising an artefact scatter? (SU 69100 73150). A Roman coin was also recorded at Grovelands (Ref. 01675.00.000) c 450m west of the site (SU 68800 73600). Closer to the site a Roman coin was recorded at 52 Beecham Road (Ref. 01680.00.000) c 200m to the northwest of the site (SU 69080 73700).

2.4 Saxon

A Saxon spearhead was recorded at 57 Kent Road (Ref. 01644.00.000) c 550m to the east (SU 69520 73110).



Fig 2 Plan of strip, map and sample investigation areas

3 The strip, map and sample investigation

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the strip, map and sample investigation was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (MOLA, 2012) and the *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

The ground was broken out and cleared by contractors under MOLA supervision. The trench was excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MOLA.

The location of the area of excavation was established by surveyors employed by the principal site contractor, Morgan Sindal. This information was then plotted onto the OS grid.

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Survey contour lines.

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20; numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The site has produced one trench location plan; two context records; one 1:10 section drawings; twenty five photographs.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code BR-WPW12 in the Reading Museum archive.

3.2 Results of the strip, map and sample investigation

In total, two areas were subject to the strip, map and sample investigation for the purposes of assessing the nature, level and extent of any surviving archaeological remains on the site. There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

For location of the strip, map and sample areas see Fig 2.

<i>Area 1</i>	
Location	East side of playing field to the north of Area 2
Dimensions	50m by 50m
Modern ground level/top of slab	47m to 51m OD
Base of subsoil	0.45m below ground level
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	47.9m OD

No archaeological deposits were found during the strip, map and sample investigation in Area 1.

A feature, which was found to be natural in origin, was recorded during the strip, map and sample investigation. It was a shallow and poorly defined gully-like linear feature [2], on a slightly meandering SW to NE course (see Fig 3). It was filled with [1], a natural deposited moderately compact mid brown clayey silt. There was a very indistinct interface between the fill and the underlying natural deposits. The feature appears to be a runnel, a naturally occurring and short lived erosion feature, the course of which follows the SW to NE fall in elevation exhibited by the surrounding land.

One piece of struck flint was recovered from the interface between topsoil and subsoil.

<i>Area 2</i>	
Location	On the east side of playing field to the south of Area 1
Dimensions	30m by 17m
Modern ground level/top of slab	47m to 51m OD
Base of subsoil	-
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	-
Level of base of deposits observed	-
Natural observed	-

The strip map and sample of Area 2 did not take place. Following an onsite review between MOLA and Berkshire Archaeology to discuss results and progress on Area 1, it was decided that no further archaeological monitoring would be required.



Fig 3 Photograph of strip, map and sample investigation area looking north-east showing excavated slot across natural feature [2] in Area 1

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

The results of the strip, map and sample investigation have demonstrated that there is no evidence of occupation or activity associated with the prehistoric, Roman or Saxon finds that have previously been made in the area.

4.2 New research aims

No new research aims are suggested by the results of the strip, map and sample investigation.

4.3 Significance of the data

Negative evidence for archaeological activity on the site is of local significance. There is nothing to suggest that this would be of regional or national importance.

5 Publication and archiving

Information on the results of the excavation will be made publicly available by means of a database in digital form, to permit inclusion of the site data in any future academic researches into the development of Reading.

The site archive containing original records and finds will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Method Statement* (MOLA, 2012) with Reading Museum (Accession No REDMG: 2012.114) within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections 4) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 4.3) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the strip, map and sample investigation should appear in the Berkshire Archaeological Journal.

6 Conclusions

The results of the strip, map and sample investigation suggests that the archaeological potential of the site is very low.

7 Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Neil Anderson of Morgan Sindal for help and cooperation during the strip, map and sample investigation. Gareth Talbot (Hampshire County Council Property Services) for commissioning the archaeological investigation on behalf of Reading District Council. Mary Neale (Berkshire Archaeology) for advice and guidance during the course of the project.

8 Bibliography

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9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-129081

Project details

Project name	Wilson Primary School, Reading RG30 2RW
Short description of the project	A strip, map and sample investigation was carried out on a 50m by 50m area on the eastern side of the playing field at Wilson Primary School, Wilson Road, Reading, RG30 2RW. No archaeological deposits were found during the strip, map and sample investigation.
Project dates	Start: 18-06-2012 End: 22-06-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	BR-WPW12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

Site location BERKSHIRE READING READING Wilson Primary School

Postcode RG30 2RW

Study area 21169.00 Square metres

Site coordinates SU 69219 73469 51 -1 51 27 19 N 001 00 13 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 48.00m Max: 48.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation MOLA

Project brief originator Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)

Project design originator MOLA

Project director/manager Stewart Hoad

Project supervisor Mark Ingrams

Type of sponsor/funding body Local Authority

Name of sponsor/funding body Reading Borough Council

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Reading Museum

Digital Archive ID REDMG:2012:114

Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Database","GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Reading Museum
Paper Archive ID	REDMG:2012:114
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Correspondence","Map","Miscellaneous Material","Plan","Report","Section","Unpublished Text"

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