

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
WILLOWBRIDGE MARINA
STOKE ROAD
BLETCHLEY
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

NGR: SP 8828 3144

on behalf of Willowbridge Marina Ltd



Martin Cuthbert BA (Hons) PIFA

August 2011

ASC: 1432/BWB/2



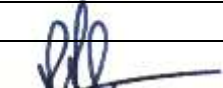
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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	BWB	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1432
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-105497	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	TBC
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Bletchley		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Stoke Hammond CP		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8828 3144		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.5000 sq m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Grassland		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Extension to canal marina		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Pre-planning		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Aylesbury Vale District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	August 2011		
<i>Client:</i>	Willowbridge Marina Ltd Stoke Road Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 3JZ		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Richard Goosey		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Martin Cuthbert	<i>Date:</i>	15 th August 2011
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	15 th August 2011

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Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In August 2011 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out at Willowbridge Marina, Stoke Road, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire prior to the construction of an extension to the present marina. Six archaeologically supervised trenches were excavated within the proposed development. All areas were cleaned to determine the presence of archaeological remains. The east-west aligned ridge and furrow earthworks present on the site were noted in five of the six trenches. The ridge and furrow earthworks were not present within Trench 2, located in the north-eastern corner of the site. Truncation caused by the construction of the canal or present marina may attribute to this. No archaeological finds or features were observed in any of the excavated areas.

1. Introduction

1.1 In August 2011 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out an evaluation at Willowbridge Marina, Stoke Road, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire. The project was commissioned by *Willowbridge Marina Ltd*, and was carried out according to a generic brief prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Aylesbury Vale District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service* and a project design prepared by ASC (Zeepvat 2011).

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5)*, in order to inform proposals for the development of the site.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *The Site*

1.4.1 *Location & Description*

The evaluation site is located on the outskirts of Milton Keynes, in the civil parish of Stoke Hammond and the Aylesbury Vale district, centred at NGR SP 8828 3144 (Fig. 1). Willowbridge Marina lies on the west bank of the Grand Union Canal, east of Stoke Road, which links Stoke Hammond village and Bletchley, and south of the A4146 Fenny Stratford bypass.

The assessment site lies to the south of the present marina, and currently comprises a grass field of c.5000 sq m (Fig. 2). The north-west corner of the field (c.2000 sq m) has been recognised as NVC (National Vegetation Classification) MG5 (mesotrophic) grassland by the LPA's ecological advisor.

1.4.2 Topography & Geology

The site comprises level ground at an elevation of 75m AOD. The river Ouzel is *c.*300m to the east. Soils on the site belong to the Bishampton 2 association, described as 'Fine loamy over clayey and clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging (Soil Survey 1983, 572t). The underlying geology comprises second terrace gravels, over Oxford clay (BGS, Sheet 220).

1.4.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development (Fig. 3) is an extension to the existing canal marina, comprising an off-canal basin with moorings for up to 56 boats, vehicle access and associated landscaping.

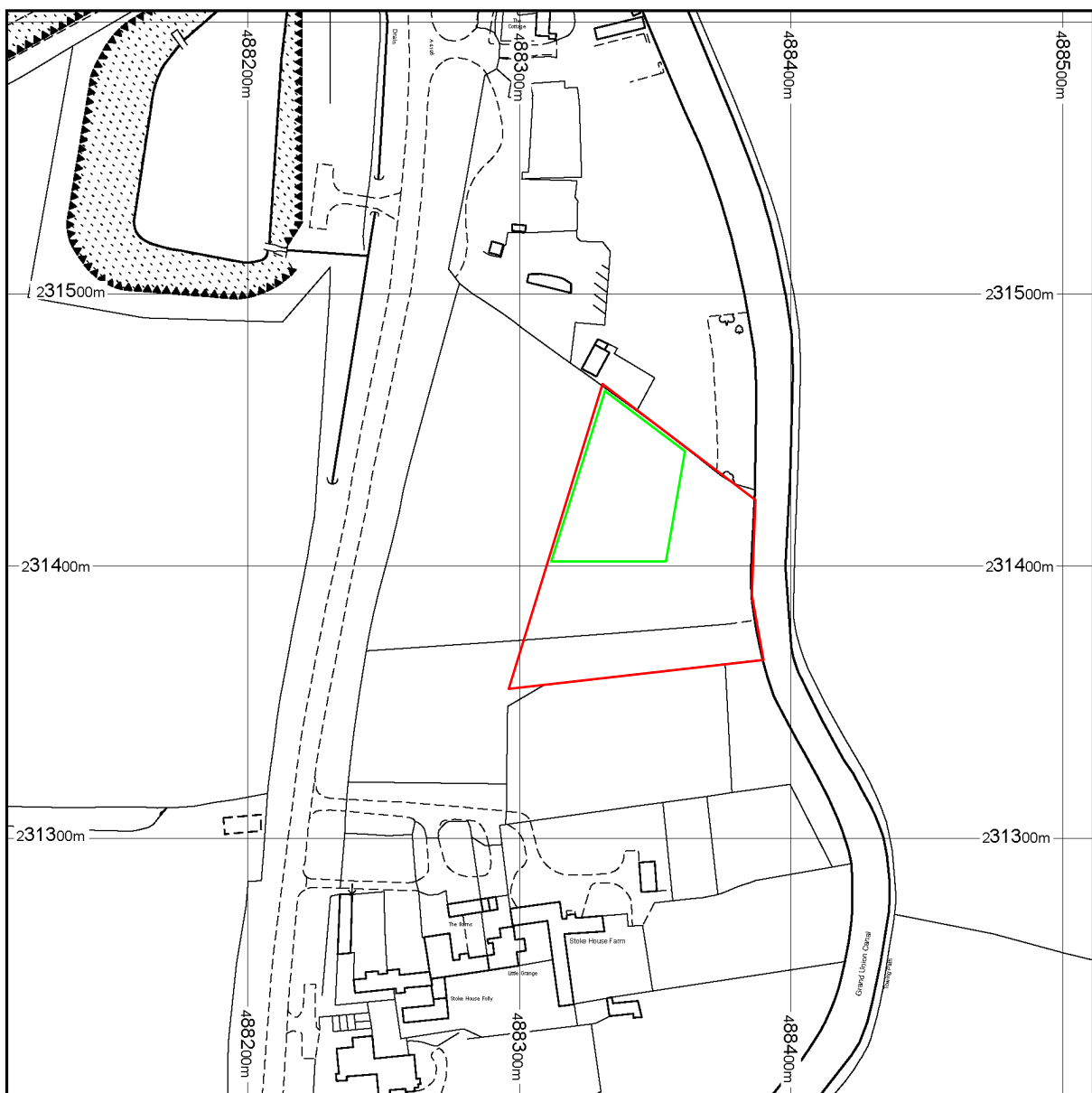


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:2500)
(Red = site boundary; Green = MG5 grass area)

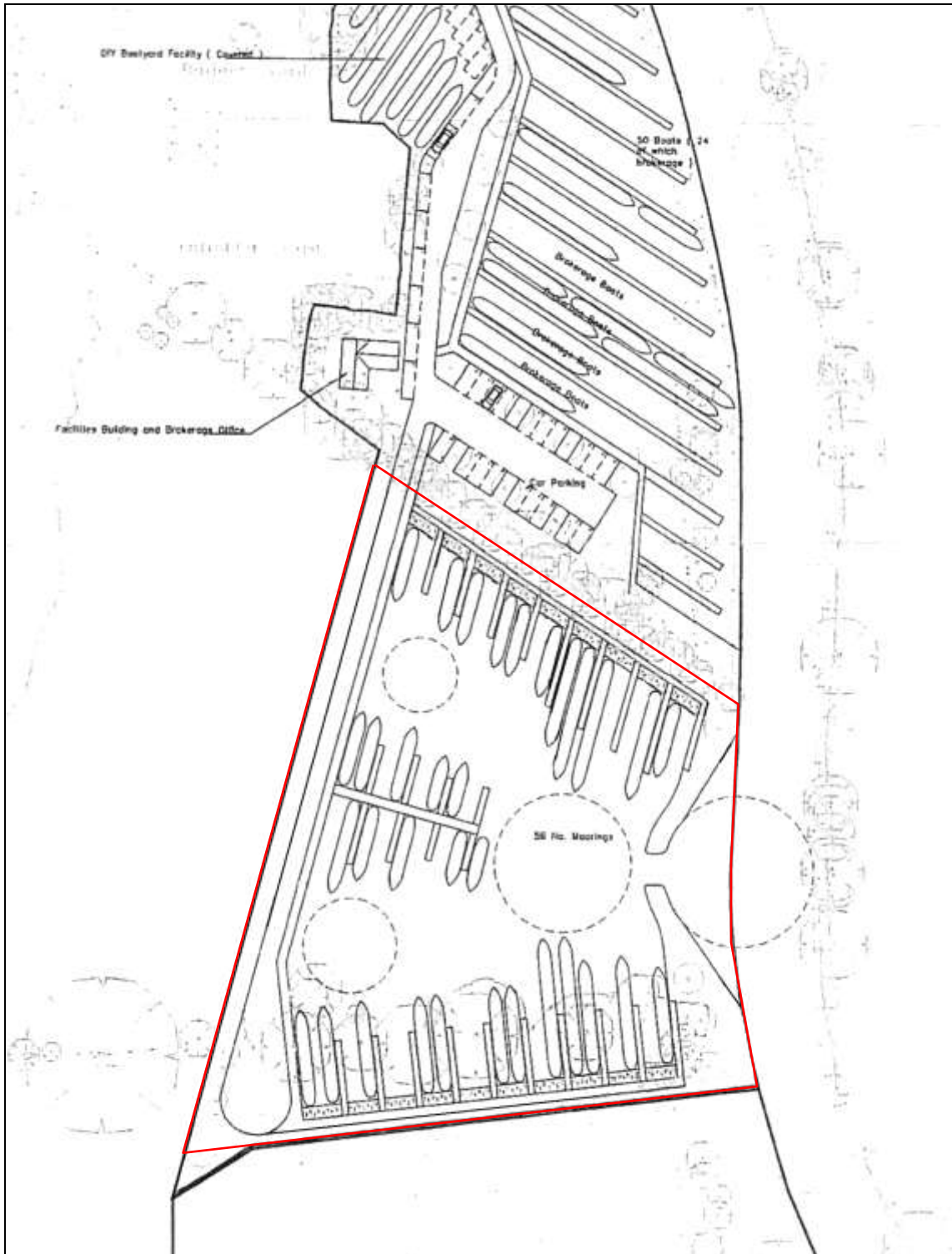


Figure 3: Proposed development (scale 1:1000)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

As described in the project design (Section 3.1), the aims of the evaluation were:

- to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains

2.2 *Standards*

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991, EH 2006), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 *Methods*

2.3.1 The work was carried out according to the project design (Section 3.3), which required:

- Excavation of 90m of trial trenches (six trenches), targeted on the proposed development. Trench locations are shown in Figure 4.

2.3.2 At the request of the LPA, excavation of the single trench in the MG5 grass area followed the stated procedures:

- Material excavated from the trench was placed on polythene sheeting alongside the trench. Turf/topsoil and subsoil were kept separate.
- Machine movements in the area were kept to a minimum.

2.4 *Constraints*

No constraints were identified prior to, or during the fieldwork stage.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (BHER), the Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record (MKHER) and ASC's reference collection.

3.2 *Prehistoric & Iron Age* (before AD43)

A possible Neolithic to Bronze Age ring ditch has been identified through aerial photography c.0.75km north-east of the development site (BHER1864). Excavations on the Stoke Hammond bypass revealed a late Bronze Age to early Iron Age field system, and a pit alignment of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age date was also identified on a similar alignment to the field system (BHER6123).

Extensive clearance of woodland had occurred across the Buckinghamshire landscape by the middle to late Iron Age, and many areas had probably been cleared earlier (Kidd 2009). Environmental evidence from Iron Age sites throughout Milton Keynes has indicated that the landscape was predominantly open grassland, with small farmsteads operating a mixed agrarian economy (Zeepvat 1991). Investigation of two early to middle Iron Age farmsteads (Brown 2008, Edgeworth 2006) during the construction of the Stoke Hammond bypass, west of the site, has confirmed a local landscape of fairly open grassland, and it is suggested that Iron Age activity in the Ouzel valley may have had a largely pastoral focus (Kidd 2009, 41). The hillfort of Danesborough lies 4.5km ENE of the excavation; it is one of a limited number of Iron Age sites in the region that could be interpreted as a proto-urban centre.

3.3 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

During the Roman period, the site lay 3km south of the small Roman town of *Magiovinium*, at the river Ouzel crossing point of the Roman road now known as Watling Street. The local landscape remained largely open and in mixed agricultural use: the principal change being the establishment of villa estates, notably along the Ouse valley to the north of Milton Keynes, where villas are recorded on both banks at c.2.0km intervals (Radford & Zeepvat 2007). No similar pattern of settlement has been observed to date in the Ouzel valley, though native settlements have been examined on the flood plain to the north at Fenny Lock (Ford *et al* 2001) and to the south at the Three Locks golf course (Ford *et al* 2000). The Roman road from Watling Street to Thornborough (now the A421) ran 2.5km north of the site (Viatores 1964), and the nearest recorded villa was at Holne Chase, 3km to the north-west (Zeepvat *in* Mynard 1987, 6-18).

Evidence for Roman activity has been identified to the north of the site, in the Water Eaton area of Bletchley and the Lakes Estate. A possible Roman cemetery was identified c.0.5km northeast of the site, where a child's skull with a probable sword cut, and part of an adult pelvis, were found in the eroding bank of the Ouzel

(BHER5967). Excavations for a sewer pipe in Water Eaton recovered sherds of Roman pottery (MKHER3060). During the construction of the Lakes Estate, Roman pottery was found in the fill of a ditch (MKHER3035).

3.4 **Saxon** (c.450-1066)

The early Saxon period in the Milton Keynes area is not well understood, and evidence for continuity of settlement is scant (Croft & Mynard 1993). In general terms, early Saxon settlement appears to have been dispersed, and periodically shifting location or focus (Hamerow 2002, 121). In the vicinity of the site, evidence for early Saxon settlement has been identified at Caldecotte (Zeepvat *et al* 1994) and Fenny Lock (Ford *et al* 2001).

Excavations to the east of Stoke Road, c.1km to the north of the site, revealed settlement evidence and an appended field system of mid Saxon date, probably a short-lived farmstead occupied during the 8th and 9th centuries (Hancock *et al* 2010).

3.5 **Medieval** (1066-1500)

From the medieval period onwards, the site formed part of the parish of Stoke Hammond, located close to its northern boundary with Bletchley, and its eastern boundary, marked by the Ouzel. Stoke Hammond appears on a document of the 11th century as *Stoches*: the suffix *Hammond* first appears in the 13th century, deriving from *Hamon*, son of Meinfelin, who held the manor in the 12th century (Page 1927, 471).

Stoke Hammond was held before the Norman Conquest by eight thegns. In 1086 it was assessed as 10 hides among the lands of Manno the Breton. It was subsequently attached to the Barony of Wolverton, and descended with Wolverton to William, son of Hamon. In the 12th to 14th centuries Stoke Hammond was held by the de Stoke family, though in 1311 two parts of the manor passed to John Grey. In 1512 the manor was settled by John Grey on John Huse, who married Anne, sister of Richard, Earl of Kent. Two years later the manor was conveyed to Sir Henry Wyatt and others, as trustees. Subsequently it passed to Sir John Williams, who exchanged all the lands with the Crown. Stoke Hammond was retained by the Crown until 1607, when it was granted to Robert, Earl of Salisbury. Later in the 17th century the manor was broken up (Page 1927, 471-475).

The site lies 2km north of the village of Stoke Hammond, within the open field system of the parish. No medieval finds are recorded in the immediate vicinity.

3.6 **Post-Medieval & Modern** (1500-present)

The site probably remained in open farmland, largely unchanged until the end of the 18th century. In 1800 the section of the Grand Junction Canal passing through Stoke Hammond from Leighton Buzzard to Fenny Stratford was opened (Faulkner 1972). This formed the eastern boundary to the site. Aerial photographs of the site taken in 1945 appear to show east-west aligned ridge-and-furrow surviving (*Google Earth*). A boatyard was established to the immediate north of the site in the 1960s: this has expanded to become the present marina.

4 Results

4.1 General

4.1.1 This section provides a summary of the results of the evaluation. Full descriptions of the trenches, in tabulated form, are provided in Appendix 1.

4.1.2 Six trenches were excavated across the development site. The trenches were opened using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless ditching bucket, working under archaeological supervision. Following excavation each trench was cleaned sufficiently to determine if archaeological remains were present. Basic trench information was recorded on pro-forma sheets and a photographic record was compiled. The spoil heaps were visually scanned looking for the presence of archaeological artefacts, but none were recovered.

4.2 Trenches 1-6 (Fig. 4: Plates 1-3)

The general stratigraphy of the trenches was the same across the whole site and comprised:

- *Topsoil and turf*: 0.05-0.24m.
- *Ploughsoil*: Soft, mid orange-brown, sandy silt, 0.22-0.50m.
- *Natural*: Firm, light brown-orange, silty clay with frequent angular pebble inclusions.

No archaeological finds or features were observed within the trenches.

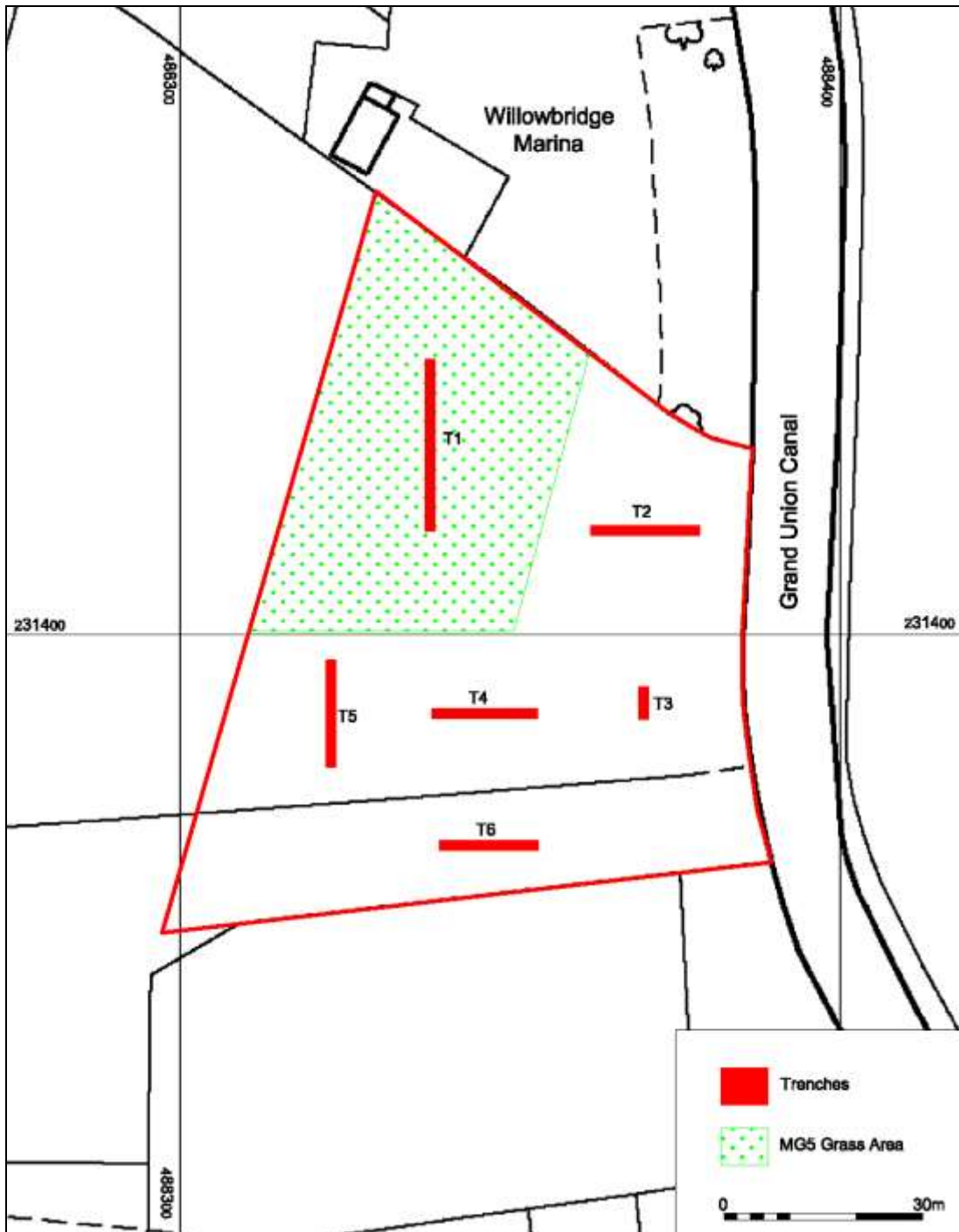


Figure 4: Trench Locations (scale 1:1000)



Plate 1: Trench 5 in the foreground. Ridges located right and left of the photo, furrow located centrally.



Plate 2: Laying of protective polythene sheeting in the MG5 grass area.



Plate 3: General trench stratigraphy. Note shallow topsoil and turf, overlying ploughsoil.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Remnants of east-west aligned ridge and furrow earthworks were identified in five of the six trenches and illustrate that this area was incorporated within the open field system of Stoke Hammond during the medieval period. The medieval ploughing probably truncated the pre-existing soil profile and may have disturbed or destroyed shallow archaeological features of earlier periods.
- 5.2 Evidence of the ridge and furrow was not present within trench 2. Truncation caused by the construction of the canal or present marina may attribute to this.
- 5.3 No archaeological features were observed in the trenches. While the existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features were present on the site. It is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains.

5.4 *Confidence Rating*

The evaluation took place in dry and sunny weather conditions. Full co-operation was received from the contractors and a high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the evaluation.

6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by *Willowbridge Marina Ltd*. The writer is grateful to Richard Goosey for his assistance. The project was monitored by Eliza Alqassar of the *Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service* on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to the machine driver Nigel Herbert.

The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Martin Cuthbert BA (Hons) PIFA & Gareth Shane BA. The report was prepared by Martin Cuthbert and edited by Bob Zeepvat.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. Site record drawings
7. List of photographs
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Buckinghamshire County Museum*.

8. References


Standards & Specifications


- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- EH 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
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Secondary Sources


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- Zeepvat RJ 1991 'The Milton Keynes Project', *Recs Buckinghamshire* **33**, 49-63.
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Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables


Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	26m	Width	1.5m	Depth	0.66-0.75m
	Levels					
	Trench top North		72.76m OD			
	Trench base North		72.04m OD			
	Trench top South		72.58m OD			
	Trench base South		71.85m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	North		South			
	Orientation		North-South			
Reason for Trench		General Trench				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
100	Layer	Turf & mid brown, soft, silty-sandy clay - Topsoil and turf	-	0.20m	0m	
101	Layer	Mid orange brown, soft, sandy silt - Plough-soil	-	0.50m	0.20m	
102	Layer	Orange brown sandy clay - Natural	-	-	0.70m	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	16.5m	Width	1.5m	Depth	0.3-0.55m
	Trench top East		71.68m OD			
	Trench base East		71.40m OD			
	Trench top West		72.06m OD			
	Trench base West		71.55m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	East		West			
	Orientation:		East-West			
	Reason for Trench:		General trench			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
200	Layer	Turf & mid brown, soft, silty-sandy clay - Topsoil and turf	-	0.24m	0m	
201	Layer	Mid orange brown, soft, sandy silt - Plough-soil	-	0.25m	0.24m	
202	Layer	Orange brown sandy silt, frequent angular stones- Natural	-	-	0.49m	

Trench 3						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	5m	Width	1.5m	Depth	0.45-0.67m
	Trench top North			71.91m OD		
	Trench base North			71.42m OD		
	Trench top South			71.68m OD		
	Trench base South			71.26m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	North			South		
Orientation:			North-South			
Reason for Trench: General trench						
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
300	Layer	Turf & mid brown, soft, silty-sandy clay - Topsoil and turf	-	0.05m	0m	
301	Layer	Mid orange brown, soft, sandy silt - Plough-soil	-	0.40m	0.05m	
302	Layer	Orange brown sandy silt, frequent angular stones- Natural	-	-	0.45m	

Trench 4						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	16m	Width	1.5m	Depth	0.55-0.8m
	Trench top East			72.09m OD		
	Trench base East			71.58m OD		
	Trench top West			72.38m OD		
	Trench base West			71.74m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	East			West		
Orientation:			East-West			
Reason for Trench: General trench						
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
400	Layer	Turf & mid brown, soft, silty-sandy clay - Topsoil and turf	-	0.15m	0m	
401	Layer	Mid orange brown, soft, sandy silt - Plough-soil	-	0.40m	0.15m	
402	Layer	Orange brown sandy silt, frequent angular stones- Natural	-	-	0.55m	

Trench 5							
	Max Dimensions (m)						
	Length	16.3m	Width	1.5m	Depth	0.8m	
	Trench top North			72.70m OD			
	Trench base North			71.93m OD			
	Trench top South			72.81m OD			
	Trench base South			72.11m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates						
North				South			
Orientation:				North- South			
Reason for Trench:				General trench			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)
500	Layer	Turf & mid brown, soft, silty-sandy clay - Topsoil and turf			-	0.10m	0m
501	Layer	Mid orange brown, soft, sandy silt - Plough-soil			-	0.50m	0.1m
502	Layer	Orange brown sandy silt, frequent angular stones- Natural			-	-	0.6m

Trench 6							
	Max Dimensions (m)						
	Length	14.5m	Width	1.5m	Depth	0.55-0.6m	
	Trench top East			72.17m OD			
	Trench base East			71.72m OD			
	Trench top West			72.39m OD			
	Trench base West			71.76m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates						
East				West			
Orientation:				East-West			
Reason for Trench:				General trench			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)
600	Layer	Turf & mid brown, soft, silty-sandy clay - Topsoil and turf			-	0.27m	0m
601	Layer	Mid orange brown, soft, sandy silt - Plough-soil			-	0.22m	0.27m
602	Layer	Orange brown sandy silt, frequent angular stones- Natural			-	-	0.49m

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Willowbridge Marina, Stoke Road, Bletchley				SITE NO/CODE: 1432/BWB
Shot	Neg	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	31	✓	✓	Trench 3 general shot, looking south, 2x1m scale
2	30	✓	✓	Trench 3 general shot, looking south, 2x1m scale
3	29	✓	✓	Trench 3 strat shot, looking east, 2x1m scale
4	28	✓	✓	Trench 3 strat shot, looking east, 2x1m scale
5	27	✓	✓	Trench 4 general shot, looking west, 2x1m scale
6	26	✓	✓	Trench 4 general shot, looking west, 2x1m scale
7	25	✓	✓	Trench 4 strat shot, looking north, 2x1m scale
8	24	✓	✓	Trench 4 strat shot, looking north, 2x1m scale
9	23	✓	✓	Trench 6 general shot, looking east, 2x1m scale
10	22	✓	✓	Trench 6 general shot, looking east, 2x1m scale
11	21	✓	✓	Trench 6 strat shot, looking north, 2x1m scale
12	20	✓	✓	Trench 6 strat shot, looking north, 2x1m scale
13	19	✓	✓	Trench 5 general shot, looking north, 2x1m scale
14	18	✓	✓	Trench 5 general shot, looking north, 2x1m scale
15	17	✓	✓	Trench 5 strat shot, looking east, 2x1m scale
16	16	✓	✓	Trench 5 strat shot, looking east, 2x1m scale
17	15	✓	✓	Trench 2 general shot, looking east, 2x1m scale
18	14	✓	✓	Trench 2 general shot, looking east, 2x1m scale
19	13	✓	✓	Trench 2 strat shot, looking south, 2x1m scale
20	12	✓	✓	Trench 2 strat shot, looking south, 2x1m scale
21	11	✓	✓	Trench 1 general shot, looking south, 2x1m scale
22	10	✓	✓	Trench 1 strat shot, looking west, 2x1m scale
23			✓	Trench 1 general shot, looking south, 2x1m scale
24-36			✓	General working shots

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Willowbridge Marina, Stoke Road, Bletchley	OASIS reference:	archaeol2-105497
Short Description:	In August 2011 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out at Willowbridge Marina, Stoke Road, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire prior to the construction of an extension to the present marina. Six archaeologically supervised trenches were excavated within the proposed development. All areas were cleaned to determine the presence of archaeological remains. The east-west aligned ridge and furrow earthworks present on the site were noted in five of the six trenches. The ridge and furrow earthworks were not present within Trench 2, located in the north-eastern corner of the site. Truncation caused by the construction of the canal or present marina may attribute to this. No archaeological finds or features were observed in any of the excavated areas.		
Project Type:	Evaluation		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	None
Current land use:	Grassland	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	unknown
Monument type:	N/a	Monument period:	N/a
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Buckinghamshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	Willowbridge Marina Ltd, Stoke Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 3JZ		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	c. 5000sq m	Height OD: (metres)	c. 75m OD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service	Project design originator:	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA	Director/Supervisor:	Martin Cuthbert BA (Hons) PIFA
Sponsor / funding body:	Willowbridge Marina Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	08-08-11	End date:	09-08-11
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Buckinghamshire County Museum	none	
Paper:		Site records, report, photographs	
Digital:		CD-ROM with copies of all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation: Willowbridge Marina, Stoke Road, Bletchley		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1432/BWB/2		
Author(s):	Martin Cuthbert BA (Hons) PIFA		
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