



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: FOOTBRIDGE CASTLE MEADOW NEWPORT PAGNELL

*for Broughton Beatty Ltd.
on behalf of Milton Keynes Council*



A.J. Hancock BSc PgDip

September 2006

ASC: 824/NCM/01

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	NCM	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	824
<i>Event No:</i>	1072	<i>Accession No:</i>	Pending
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire (historic county)		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Newport Pagnell		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Newport Pagnell		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8786 4392		
<i>Present use:</i>	Recreational		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Footpath and bridge		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	05/1198/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Milton Keynes Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	July – September 2006		
<i>Client:</i>	Broughton Beatty Station House Station Road Newport Pagnell Bucks, MK16 0AG		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Gary Lucas		
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Internal Quality Check

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

Summary

During July – September 2006 ASC Ltd carried out a watching brief during construction of a footpath and bridge crossing the River Ouzel on the eastern periphery of Newport Pagnell. The machine strip of overburden prior to construction of the footpath was extremely shallow and in places failed to completely remove the topsoil. Footings for four brick piers to support the bridge super-structure showed that a greater depth of topsoil was present nearer the river channel and this may suggest input of sediment dredged from the river during recent centuries. Archaeological finds or features were not revealed by the groundworks although the work on the northern river bank was carried out close to the suggested position of Civil War earthwork defences.

1. Introduction

1.1 Through July-September 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief during groundwork for construction of a footpath and bridge crossing the River Ouzel at Castle Meadow, Newport Pagnell (NGR SP 8786 4392: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Broughton Beatty Ltd on behalf of Milton Keynes Council, and was carried out according to ASCs standard method statement, and a brief prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Milton Keynes Council* (MKC), by the Councils archaeological advisor (AA).

1.2 *Planning Background*

The watching brief was required as a planning condition under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of a footpath and bridge crossing the River Ouzel. The relevant planning application reference is 05/1198/FUL.

1.3 *Location*

The site of the footpath and bridge lies at the eastern periphery of Newport Pagnell, c.100m southeast of the High Street and c.100m northeast of Tickford Bridge (Fig 2).

1.4 *Description*

The development lay in the flood plain of the River Ouzel and the area of groundworks south of the River crossed an open riverside meadow. Physical boundaries defining the groundworks were largely absent although a metalled footpath following the course of the river defined its southern extent. The part of the development on the northern river bank lay within a small triangular parcel of land bounded at the southeast by the river, to the northeast by a brick boundary wall and to the west by a road (Fig. 2).

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site lies on level ground, at an elevation of c.55m AOD. The superficial geology comprises River Terrace Deposits, consisting of about 1m depth of brown sandy clay or clayey sand, underlain by sandy gravel with cobbles. The underlying geology comprises Kellaway sands and gravels, which cover Cornbrash limestone.

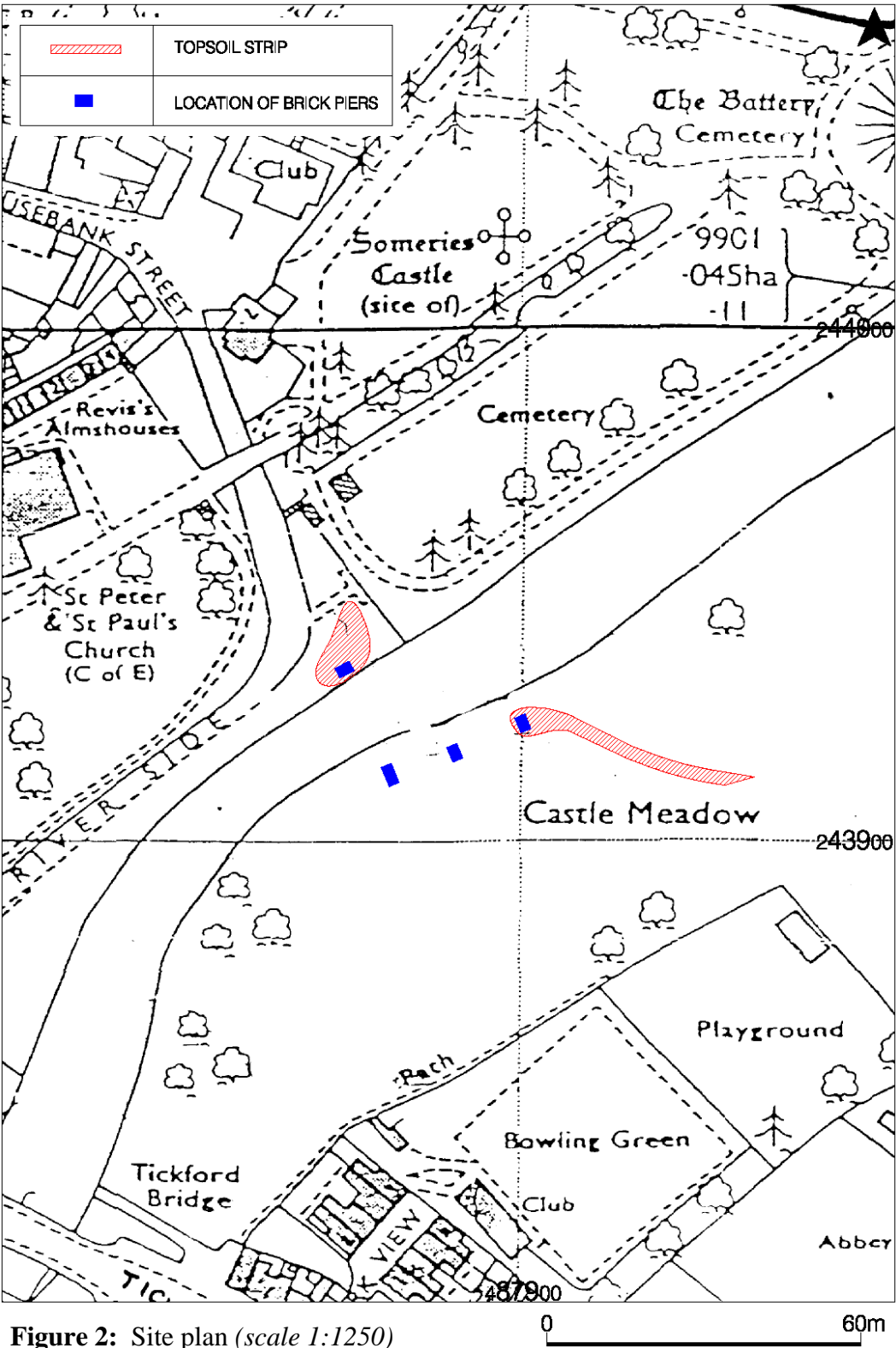


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 1), the aims of the watching brief were:

- archaeological monitoring of all excavations deeper than 300m below ground level.
- excavation and recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the brief, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to ASC's standard method statement for watching briefs, which specifies:

- The presence of a qualified and experienced archaeologist during all works which could affect buried archaeology
- The excavation, cleaning and sampling of significant archaeological features in order to demonstrate their general date and character
- Appropriate levels of recording of archaeological remains
- Recording the extent and depth of all intrusive groundworks
- Where any archaeological remains are found whose presence could not have been reasonably anticipated, and whose recording or preservation *in situ* is not possible within the resources available, all work will cease and the County Archaeologist and the Inspector of Ancient Monuments will be invited to meet to discuss how the matter might be resolved.

2.4 Constraints

No constraints were identified prior to or during the fieldwork and work was carried out according to the aims and methods detailed in the brief.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 Introduction

The town and environs of Newport Pagnell are of considerable archaeological and historical interest, and many of the properties along the High Street are listed buildings. Today the plan of the town owes much to the survival of burgage plots located along both sides of the High Street that were formed during the medieval period. The evidence for human activity during this and other periods is summarised in the following paragraphs.

3.2 Prehistoric (before 600BC)

The gravel terraces of the river Ouse and its tributary the river Ouzel have revealed ample evidence of prehistoric activity and settlement, dating back at least to c.2000BC. The most notable monuments of this period are the Bronze Age ‘ring ditches’ or burial mounds found throughout the river floodplains, and studied in depth by Green (1974). Discoveries of this period made in the vicinity of Newport Pagnell are summarized elsewhere (Mynard & Hunt 1995, ix): to date, no prehistoric sites or finds have been identified within the town.

3.3 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

Iron Age sites or finds have not been recovered within Newport Pagnell.

3.4 Roman (AD43-c.450)

Chance finds of Roman coins have been made in the High Street and Caldecote Street, and excavations in the gardens of Tickford Abbey, 1km west of the site, revealed a ‘minor Roman settlement’, presumably a farmstead, of 2nd to 4th-century date (Mynard & Hunt, *op. cit.*). A Roman road followed the Ouzel and Ouse valleys between the Roman towns at *Magiovinium* (Fenny Stratford) and Irchester (Zeepvat 1991, 18). Its exact route is unknown, but as it almost certainly crossed the river Ouse at Ashfurlong, near Olney, where traces of an extensive Roman settlement are known, it likely passed to the east of Newport Pagnell.

3.5 Saxon (c.450-1066)

Newport Pagnell was probably established during the late Saxon period, in the 8th or 9th century (Mynard & Hunt, *op. cit.*). Its strategic location at the junction of two rivers and a crossing point, close to *Watling Street*, which formed the boundary between Saxon Mercia and the Danish-held eastern part of the country, made it of potential importance to both sides. Following the capture of London by King Alfred in 885, Newport and the surrounding settlements passed into Saxon hands. The town plan was probably laid out by them, as was the contemporary settlement at Buckingham.

3.6 Medieval (1066-1500)

Newport Pagnell is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, where it is referred to as ‘*Newport*’, (Morris 1978) and was one of only two boroughs in the county at that time (the other being Buckingham). The Survey entry makes it clear that Newport was a populous, thriving town. The name ‘Newport Pagnell’ derives from the Pagnell

family, who acquired the town by marriage in the late 11th century, and held it for some 150 years. In about 1100 Fulk Pagnell granted lands in Tickford, east of the town, to the French abbey of Marmoutier, whose monks built Tickford Priory, which was situated c.1km east of the application area. Newport remained a prosperous market town throughout the medieval period.

3.7 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

During the Civil War the town's strategic location was recognized by both sides, and it was occupied first by royalist troops commanded by Prince Rupert and subsequently by parliamentary forces, who held the town until 1645. Both sides drew up plans for the construction of entrenchments and fortifications around the town although it is uncertain how many were built. Mapping dated to the 17th century suggests that Civil War defences may run close to the current development (Fig 3) although an earlier negative watching brief was carried out by ASC (Zeepvat 1999a) on the line of the defences c.80m to the southwest of the current development.

The 17th century map also shows a pool in the river, which is crossed by the masonry bridge which preceded Tickford Bridge, at an area west of the current development. Earlier watching briefs carried out by ASC (Zeepvat 1999b, King 2001, Crank, 2004) in this area have confirmed the presence of "made ground" on both banks of the current river channel; evidence which could confirm the former location of this pool and attest to its deliberate infilling.

Newport appears to have remained essentially the same size throughout much of this period with settlement centred on the High Street, St John Street, and the upper end of Silver Street. However, the establishment of Joseph Salmons' coach building works in 1820 (now Aston Martin), the opening of the railway works (1840) and other industries at Wolverton, and the coming of the canals (1817) and the railways (1865) to Newport Pagnell resulted in a great demand for new housing in the town. One of the major areas of development was to the south-west of the town, between Silver Street, the High Street, and the terminal basin of the Newport Pagnell Canal, later the terminus of the Newport Pagnell Railway.

3.8 Modern (1900-present)

The plan of the town centre remained much the same, although the construction and opening of Britain's first motorway, the M1, in 1959 transformed the area around the town (Pevsner and Williamson 2000). More residential housing was built and the town, once its own borough, became part of the Milton Keynes borough in 1967 (*ibid*).

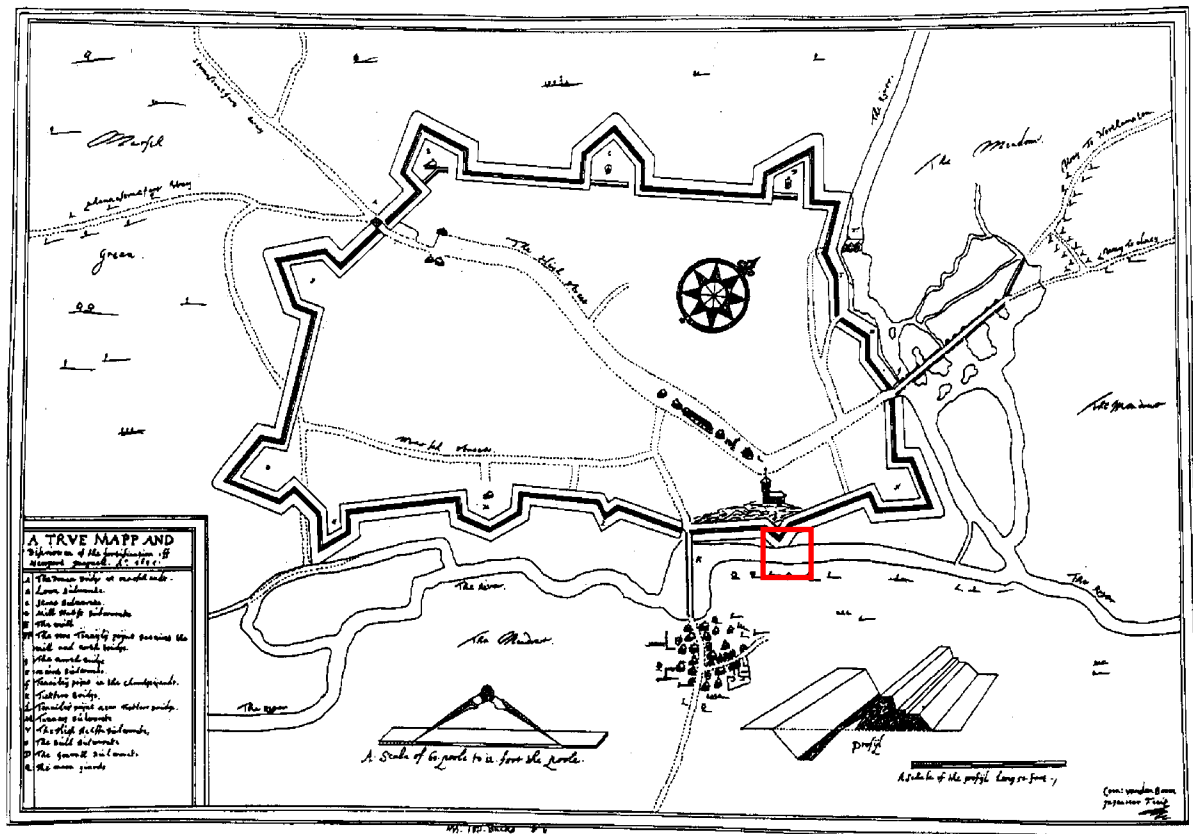


Figure 3: Plan of proposed Civil War defences for Newport Pagnell, 1664 showing approximate location of modern footpath and bridge

4. Results

- 4.1 Topsoil was machine stripped to a maximum depth of c.0.2m on the southern bank of the river (Plate 1). A mid reddish brown silty clay underlay the topsoil at the southern half of the footpath and fragments of clay pipe, oyster shell, bone and 19th century ceramic building material (CBM) were observed on the surface of this deposit. Very little topsoil was removed along the northern c.17m of the footpath where a ramp was later constructed (Plate 2). Fragments of limestone, shell and 19th century CBM, pottery, glass and iron objects were noted within the topsoil. No archaeological finds or features were observed along the c.2.5m wide route of the footpath.
- 4.2 The topsoil strip prior to construction of an earth ramp (Plate 3) on the northern bank of the river was also extremely shallow and failed to penetrate the topsoil. Fragments of limestone, shell and 19th/20th century CBM were present within the topsoil. No archaeological finds or features were observed during this phase of work.
- 4.3 Piled concrete foundations were drilled and four footing trenches for the construction of brick piers to support the bridge super-structure were subsequently machine excavated. Three of the piers were located on the southern river bank (Plates 4 and 5) and a single brick pier was located on the northern bank (Plate 6).
- 4.4 The soil profile revealed by the footing trenches of the brick piers was uniform and showed c.0.3m of organic topsoil containing 19th/20th century CBM and fragments of limestone masonry overlying an unknown depth of mid reddish brown silty clay. No archaeological finds or features were observed during excavation of the footing trenches.



Plate 1: Topsoil strip for footpath, southern river bank



Plate 2: Completed footpath and ramp, southern river bank



Plate 3: Ramp on northern river bank



Plate 4: Brick piers on southern river bank



Plate 5: Detail of brick piers on southern river bank



Plate 6: Brick pier on northern river bank

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The absence of archaeological features along the southern half of the footpath and the presence of CBM and other detritus dating to the 19th / 20th centuries in the topsoil indicates that this area may have seen little use due to the risk of flooding. An alternative explanation could suggest that this area was used as arable land prior to its current role as recreational space.
- 5.2 Incorporation of shell into the topsoil could indicate deposition of material dredged from the river. The presence of fragments of limestone masonry, which could have been deposited in the river sediments during demolition of the masonry bridge that preceded Tickford Bridge, may support this hypothesis although the incorporation of this material into the top/subsoil as a consequence of manuring with midden material is not discounted.
- 5.3 The shallowness of the topsoil strip along much of the northern half of the footpath and at the area on the northern bank of the river meant that it was difficult to determine the presence or absence of archaeological features at these locations. However, if any cut features are present below the topsoil they will likely have remained undamaged by this development.
- 5.4 A natural soil profile was evident in all four brick pier footings, which suggests that the footpath and bridge are located in a position beyond the eastern boundary of a pool shown on 17th century mapping.
- 5.5 The absence of archaeological features dating to the Civil War period on the northern river bank indicates that the proposed defences were never constructed or that they lie some distance to the north.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Broughton Beatty Ltd for commissioning this project on behalf of Milton Keynes Council and thanks are also due to Julian Smith of Harwood Structures (Contractors). The project was monitored on behalf of Milton Keynes Council by Nick Crank (Planning Archaeologist).

The fieldwork was carried out by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA, Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA and the author.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site Monitoring Sheets
5. List of photographs
6. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum. At the time of writing an accession number has been requested, but not yet issued.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

IFA 2000 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.

IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.

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Secondary Sources

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Zeepvat R J 1999b *An Archaeological Watching Brief at James Yard, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes*. (ASC: M/JYN99/2).

Zeepvat, B 2003 *Ironbridge Works, Tickford Street, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes: Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (ASC: NPI03/1)

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD	
Project: <u>Castle Teuchow</u>		Project No/Code: <u>824 INCM</u>	
Newport Pagnell		Date of visit: <u>24/7/06</u>	
Client/Developer: <u>Milton Keynes Council</u>			
Contact:		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: <u>12.50pm</u>	
Completed by: <u>JRH</u>		Finish: <u>2.05pm</u>	
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify): <u>Bridge Facelift</u>	
Site & weather conditions: <u>Dry, Sunny & hot.</u>			
Observations: <u>The area to the South of the Stream had been channel and marked out by the Surveyors. To the north of the Stream vegetation & trees had been cleared.</u>			
Comments: <u>No excavation has taken place yet.</u>			

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: <i>Castle Meadow</i>		Project No/Code: <i>824 INCM</i>		Sheet: <i>2</i> of <i>2</i>		
Client/Developer: <i>Newport Ragrell</i>		Date of visit: <i>7/8/06</i>				
Contact: <i>Swannsit, chumbea</i>		Phone: <i>07717-861352</i>				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: <i>10am</i>		Finish:		
Completed by: <i>JRA</i>						
Development Type:						
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dry & cloudy</i>						
Observations: <i>Visited the Site as pitting had begun at the area of the topsoil strips had been demonstrated</i>						
Comments: <i>Topsoil strips Wednesday/Thursday. SC said he would phone</i>						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: <i>Castle Meadow</i>		Project No/Code: <i>824 1405</i>	Sheet: <i>3</i> of
<i>Newport Pagnell</i>		Date of visit: <i>9/8/06</i>	
Client/Developer <i>JTK Conrail</i>			
Contact: <i>Swarnjit, Chumber</i>		Phone: <i>07717-861352</i>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>1.59pm</i>	Finish:	
Completed by: <i>JRA</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dry and cloudy.</i>			
Observations: <i>Observed the foundation for the footpath leading to the new bridge. This was c. 3m wide by 0.2m at its southern end which became progressively shallower as it approached the new crossing some 25m to the north. For the first 2m or so the exposed ground was on a brown silty clay, thereafter the exposed ground was all topped that contained fragments of oolitic limestone, brick, tile, slate, unglazed shells, bottle glass, iron fittings and 19 pottery. There is a slight rise or bank closer to the river which looks as though it was due to the 'scouring' of the river in previous times. On the brown clay there are occasional fragments of oyst. shell, clay pipe stems, bone & tile.</i>			
Comments: <i>The area has been 'turned over' by metal detectors. No significant finds or features noted.</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



Project: CASTLE MEADOW		Project No/Code: 1		Sheet: 4 of	
NEWPORT FACNEL		Date of visit: 16/28/06			
Client/Developer: Mike					
Contact: See previous sheets.			Phone:		
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: 2.30		Finish: 3.00	
Completed by:					
Development Type:					
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines
					Other (specify): path.
Site & weather conditions:					
Dry, clear, warm.					
Observations:					
Bases for all four piers dug and completed.					
Top 200mm of each foundation pit still visible -					
disturbed soil with quantities of brick debris					
and some ^{ASHLAR} limestone limestone building rubble, or					
possibly droppings from river? NO ARCH FINDS					
NOTED.					
Comments:					
Consider worth a final visit when the					
path on the north side is stripped. Don't					
know when when this will be - Some however					
not there to ask					

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Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Footbridge, Castle Meadow, Newport Pagnell				SITE NO/CODE: 824/NCM
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			✓	Topsoil strip for footpath
2			✓	Completed footpath and ramp
3			✓	Ramp on northern river bank
4			✓	Brick piers on southern river bank
5			✓	Detail of brick piers on southern river bank
6			✓	Brick pier on northern river bank

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	Watching Brief: Footbridge, Castle Meadow, Newport Pagnell					
Short Description:	A watching brief was carried during groundworks for a new footbridge over the River Ouzel on the eastern outskirts of Newport Pagnell. No archaeological finds or features were observed.					
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
	WB	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		None	
Current land use:	Recreational		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		none	
Monument type:	none		Monument period:		none	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Bucks (Historic County)		OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)			
District:	Newport Pagnell		Parish:		Newport Pagnell	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Castle Meadow, Newport Pagnell					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	-		Height OD: (metres)		c.55	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	Nick Crank		Project design originator:		-	
Project Manager:	D Fell		Director/Supervisor:		A J Hancock	
Sponsor / funding body:	Milton Keynes Council					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	July 2006		End date:		September 2006	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	None		-			
Paper:	Bucks County Museum		Monitoring sheets, site plans, report, brief			
Digital:	Bucks County Museum		Report, illustrations, photos			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	Watching Brief: Footbridge, Castle Meadow, Newport Pagnell					
Serial title & volume:						
Author(s):	A.J. Hancock					
Page nos	1-20		Date: 11/09/06			