

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF ON
FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME,
CHURCH STREET,
WOLVERTON,
MILTON KEYNES**

on behalf of Anglian Water Services Limited



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March 2005

ASC: 620/WCS/01

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	WCS	<i>Project no:</i>	620
<i>SMR reference / Event No:</i>	929		
<i>Date of Fieldwork:</i>	December 2004 – January 2005		
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>District:</i>	Milton Keynes (Unitary Authority)		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Wolverton		
<i>Parish:</i>	Wolverton CP		
<i>Centred NGR:</i>	SP 810 410		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of new sewerage flood alleviation scheme		
<i>Client:</i>	Anglian Water Services Ltd Thorpe Wood House Thorpe Wood Peterborough PE3 6WT		
<i>Contact:</i>			

Internal Quality Check

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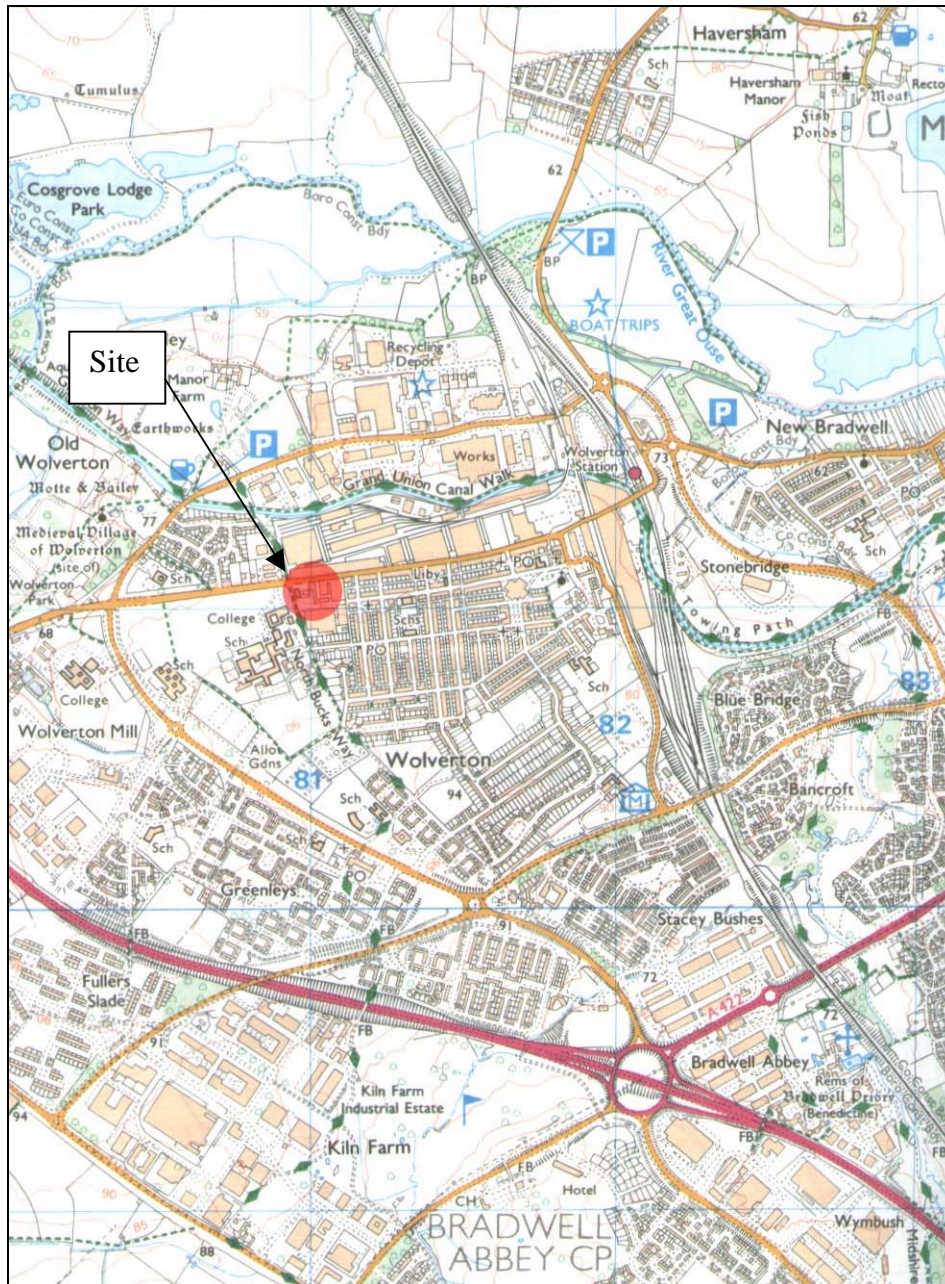


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

Between December 2004 and January 2005 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on a site in Wolverton, Milton Keynes. The project was undertaken during the excavation of shafts and trenches for a new flood alleviation sewerage system. No archaeological remains were observed during the works.

1 Introduction

1.1 Between December 2004 and January 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on a site centred around Church Street, Milton Keynes (NGR: SP 810 410, Fig. 1) The project was commissioned by Bill Irvine of Atkins on behalf of the client Anglian Water Services Limited. In the absence of a brief the work was carried out according to a standard method statement prepared by ASC and agreed with the Milton Keynes Council Archaeologist (MKCA).

1.2 *Reason for Work*

As the development is within an area of known archaeological potential, the MKCA acting as archaeological advisor to Milton Keynes Council recommended that a watching brief should be undertaken, to enable archaeological monitoring of the groundworks. The client and their consultant accepted this advice and an archaeological watching brief was commissioned.

1.3 *Setting*

1.3.1 The application area is located on the west side of Wolverton town centre, in the administrative district of Milton Keynes (Fig. 1). The soils of the application area are unmapped but are probably those of the Badsey 1 Association; namely well drained fine loamy soils, over river terrace gravel (Soil Survey 1983).

1.3.2 The proposed development comprises excavations of shafts and trenches forming part of a new flood alleviation sewerage system.



Figure 2: Site Plan and Areas of Observation (scale 1:2500)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were:

- To consider the location, extension, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains revealed by the development
- To produce an accurate and full record of any archaeological remains present, such that a permanent record will be made and the results presented in such a way that they can be re-examined and interpreted in the future

2.2 Methods

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

- Observation of soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision, on an intermittent basis;
- Inspection of sub-soil for archaeological features;
- The excavation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits;
- Sub-soil stripping under archaeological supervision;
- Examination of any trenches and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological deposits;
- Rapid examination of spoil heaps for archaeological material.

2.3 Standards

The work conformed to the 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*.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The Wolverton area is one of considerable archaeological and historical importance and a variety of archaeological sites are situated in the area.
- 3.2 A scatter of Mesolithic flints have been located along the Bradwell Brook valley, c.2km north of the application area, and a late Neolithic to early Bronze Age settlement was situated at Stacey Bushes, c.1km southeast of the study area (Green & Sofranoff 1985). A number of Bronze Age ring ditches (burial mounds) have been located at Moon Street and Warren Farm, 1km east and 800m west of the study area respectively. A late Bronze Age and Iron Age farmstead was located south of the application area, at Blue Bridge (Williams & Zeepvat 1994).
- 3.3 The principal site in the Wolverton area during the Roman period was the extensive villa at Bancroft (Williams and Zeepvat 1994), c.1km east of the application area. A cemetery was linked with the villa, which included an impressive 2nd century temple-mausoleum, located on the site of the earlier Iron Age farmstead (above). A number of native occupation sites are known in the area, with examples at Kiln Farm, 1km southwest of the study area, and near Stonebridge Farm, c.1.25km to the northeast.
- 3.4 Wolverton was occupied during the Saxon period, and the chance discovery of a number of Saxon artefacts suggests that the Saxon settlement may have been centred c.1km west of the study area, around Warren Farm and the parish church. Evidence of Saxon activity in this area was found during excavations at the Warren Farm ring ditch. Wolverton is mentioned in the Domesday Survey (1086), where it is named as *Wlverintone*. This place name may be of 8th or 9th century origin and translates as 'Wulfhere's Tun', or 'Wulfhere's estate' (Croft & Mynard 1993). A cemetery dating to the Saxon period has been located immediately to the east of the study area (Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments references 2304 and 2305).
- 3.5 The village of Old Wolverton is perhaps the best preserved medieval village in Milton Keynes and is situated to the north of the modern town. It was centred on the parish church and the adjacent motte-and-bailey castle was built by *Meinfelin, baron of Wolverton*, in the late 11th or early 12th century. The village became deserted during the 15th and 16th century, when the market town of Stoney Stratford developed to the west of Wolverton parish.
- 3.6 The modern town of Wolverton developed during the mid 19th century, to the east and south of the medieval village. The London and Birmingham Railway opened in 1838 and passed to the east of the medieval village site. The modern town of Wolverton developed during the second half of the 19th century following the opening of a new railway station and a major locomotive depot.

4 Results

4.1 Three visits were made to the site to monitor the excavation of trenches and shafts for the new sewerage. No significant archaeological remains were observed during the works.

4.2 Excavations were observed in three separate areas during the course of the project (Fig. 2):

4.2.1 Area 1 comprised the excavation a circular shaft to a depth of c.20m. Observations were made during the excavation of the upper level of this shaft revealing disturbed topsoil and modern made ground to a depth of 0.6m overlying the natural mid orange clayey sand and gravel (Plate 1).

4.2.2 Area 2 comprised the excavation of a cross-shaped trench to a depth of 1.0m. Modern made ground was observed beneath the concrete hardstanding to a depth of 0.5m and overlying the natural clay as in Area 1.

4.2.3 Area 3 comprised excavation of a cross-shaped trench as in Area 2. A cobbled former road surface was revealed below the present road base. This surface was set in a layer of dirty redeposited natural clay which in turn sealed the natural clay as in Areas 1 and 2 (Plate 2).

4.3 In addition to observing the excavation of the shafts and trenches the resulting spoil was also scanned for artefacts yet none were recovered.

4.4 *Archaeological impact of the development*

It is unlikely that significant archaeological remains survive within the areas observed and consequently the archaeological impact of the development has been minimal.

4.5 *Confidence Rating*

Due to the favourable weather conditions and lighting combined with the full cooperation of the client and contractors a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the watching brief.



Plate 1: Area 1 excavation, looking north east



Plate 2: Area 3 excavation showing former road surface (*Scale: 1m*)

5. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Bill Irvine of *Atkins* for commissioning the project on behalf of *Anglian Water Services Limited*. We would also like to acknowledge the co-operation of *AMEC* the groundwork contractors, in particular Dimitri Loisou. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Milton Keynes library and to Mr Brian Giggins, Archaeological Officer of *Milton Keynes Council* who acted as curatorial officer.

The fieldwork was undertaken for ASC Ltd by Nicholas A Crank BSc AIFA, David Fell MA MIFA, and Nigel Wilson HND AIFA. The report was prepared by Nicholas A Crank and edited by David Fell MA MIFA.


6. Archive

No formal archive will be prepared for this project, but a copy of the report and a CD containing the report and digital images will be lodged with the Milton Keynes SMR.

8. Bibliography

- Croft R A & Mynard D C 1993 *The changing landscape of Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Arch. Soc. Monograph Series **5** (Aylesbury).
- Green H S & Sofranoff S 1985 'A Neolithic settlement at Stacey Bushes, Milton Keynes' *Records of Buckinghamshire* **27**, 10-37.
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Soil Survey 1983 *The 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Williams R J & Zeepvat R J 1994 *Bancroft: a late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age settlement, Roman villa and temple-mausoleum* (2 vols). Buckinghamshire Arch. Soc. Monograph Series **7** (Aylesbury).

Appendix 1: Field Monitoring Records

 A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: FLOOD ALLEVIATION, WOLVERTON		Project No/Code: 620 1 WCS	Sheet: 1 of 1			
Client/Developer ANGLIAN WATER / ATKINS / AMEC		Date of visit: 15 / 12 / 04				
Contact: DIMITRI LOISOU (ENGINEER)		Phone: 07973 389493				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 12.00	Finish: 12.40				
Completed by: NAC						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: OVERCAST, DRY.						
Observations: MET ENGINEER (DIMITRI/LOU) AND FOREMAN (MARK). SHAFT 2 (SEE PLAN) COMPLETED AND LINED (SEE DIGI SHOTS) TO DEPTH OF C.20m. SHAFT 1 UNDERWAY AND SUNK INTO NAT TO DEPTH OF C.1.8m. (SEE DIGI SHOTS). TYPICAL SECTION = 0.00 - 0.60m MADE GROUND + SERVICE RUNS. 0.60m+ NAT - ^{MUD} ORANGE/YELLOW CLAYEY SAND + LIMESTONE GRAVEL. NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS RECOVERED OR FEATURES OBSERVED.						
Comments: NO NEW WORKS UNTIL NEW YEAR: COMMENCING 4/1/05. CALL ENGINEER TO ARRANGE VISIT.						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: WOLVERTON FLOOD ALLEVIATION		Project No/Code: 1	Sheet: of
		Date of visit: 12/01/05	
Client/Developer DIMITAL			
Contact:		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 10:30	Finish: 11:20	
Completed by: DF			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Bright and sunny - but cold.			
Observations: RESPONDED TO A CALL FROM DIMITAL (SITE FOREMAN) ON 11/01/05. SITE SA HAD BEEN EXCAVATED THEREFORE MONITORING REQUIRED. CROSS SHAPED TRENCHES EXCAVATED TO DEPTH OF 8CM TO 1M. (PTO FOR SKETCHES). UPPER LAYERS COMPRISE MODERN CONCRETE SURFACE AND MAKE UP (APT. 50CM DEEP), ABOVE GREY CLAY OVER ORANGE CLAY - NATURAL. NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES PRESENT.			
Comments: SITE FOREMAN WILL CONTACT ASC WHEN NEXT TRENCHES ARE OPENED			

For sketch plan, use reverse

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