

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON THE STRIPPING OF
THE THAMES WATER SITE COMPOUND ADJACENT TO WATERLOO
FARM, OCKHAM, SURREY**

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) on the topsoil stripping of a site compound for Thames Water adjacent to Waterloo Farm, Ockham. Although there were no specific or known archaeological concerns within the area, the watching brief was recommended due to the large area of the compound (50m by 35m with an access strip 12m by 10m). No features of archaeological interest were identified in the stripped area, but a couple of stray finds (a struck flint flake, a possible retouched flint and a fragment of burnt flint of probable prehistoric date) were recovered.

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1. Introduction

Between 19th and 21st November 2007 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by staff of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) during the site strip for the creation of a site compound for Thames Water adjacent to Waterloo Farm, Ockham in advance of engineering works (fig 1). The watching brief was recommended by Tony Howe, Surrey County Council's Heritage Conservation Archaeological Officer, due to the large size of the compound. Although there are no specific or known archaeological concerns in the area, the compound was large enough to warrant further archaeological investigation to ensure that any features or finds that may appear could be recorded properly before they were lost or damaged by the machining (Shaikhley 2007, 1).

SCAU were commissioned to undertake the archaeological watching brief by Thames Water Utilities.

2. Methodology

The area of the compound is 50m by 35m, with an access strip of 10m by 12m (fig 1). The area was stripped of 0.25-0.30m of overburden using a 360° tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket (figs 2 and 3). The stripped surface was inspected for any features of archaeological significance, and the spoil checked in order to recover any artefacts of archaeological interest.

3. Results

The stratigraphy observed across the stripped area was 0.25-0.30m topsoil over the natural mid/orange-brown sandy clay with patches of flint pebbles, and a few pockets of heavy clay in the western half of the area; this is representative of the Head deposits shown on the Geological Survey of Great Britain, map 285, covering this area, at scale 1:50,000. There was a 0.40m drop in the level of the land from east to west, and the stripped surface in the western corner of the compound area was just above the level of the water table, resulting in muddy conditions, exacerbated by the adverse weather conditions during the site strip.

No features of archaeological interest were revealed within the stripped area and only a couple of surface finds of probable prehistoric date were recovered (from the south-east quadrant of the site). The finds included one small piece of burnt flint,

a struck flint flake and one naturally created flint flake with possible edge modification to create a crude tool. None of these are dateable with precision, but all are likely to be of prehistoric date.

4. Summary

No features of archaeological interest were identified within the stripped area of the site compound, and only a couple of finds of probable prehistoric date were recovered. No further archaeological work is necessary in association with this site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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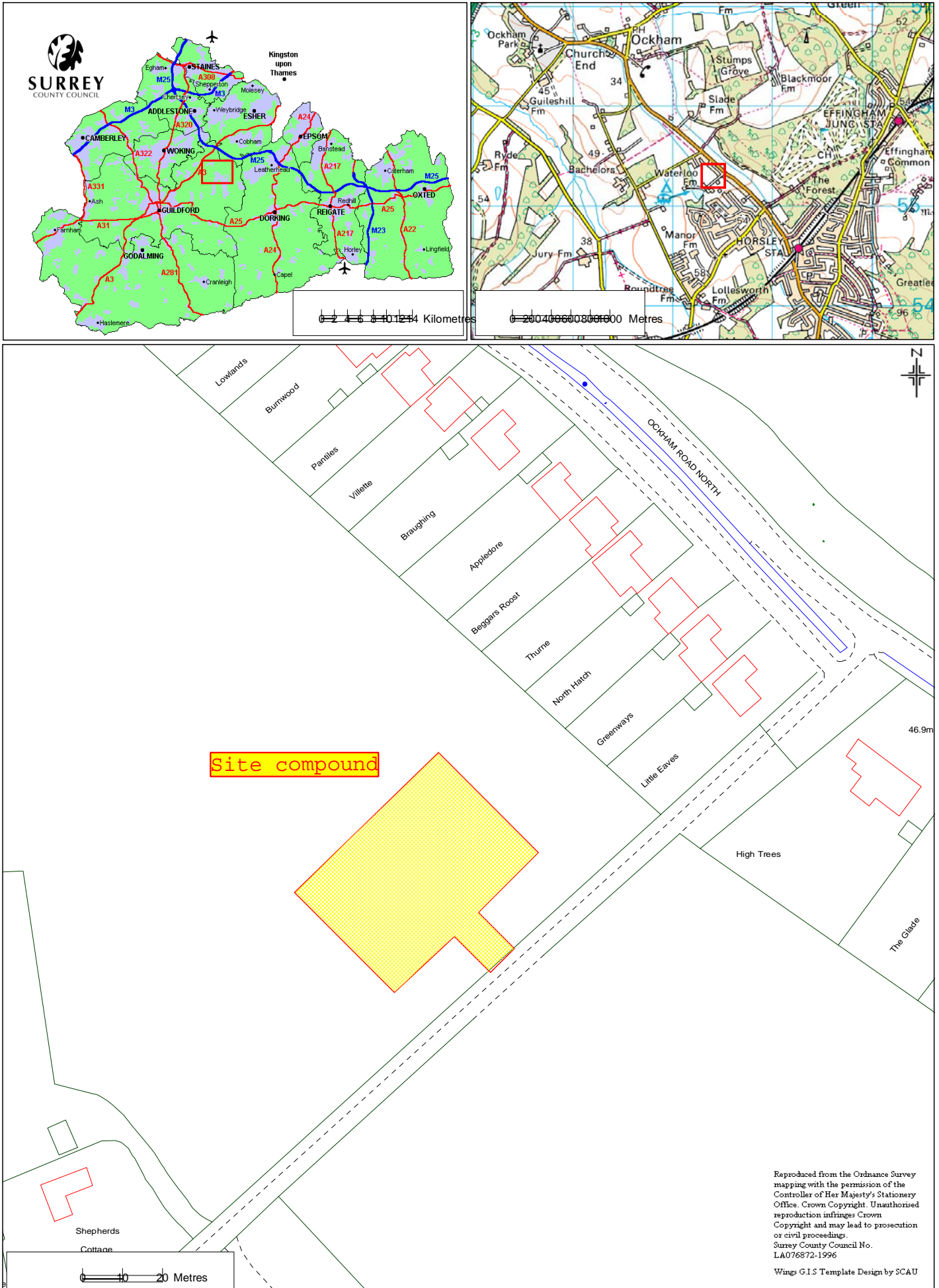


Fig 1 Site location: Thames Water site compound at Waterloo Farm, Ockham



Fig 2 Thames Water compound, Ockham, looking west



Fig 3 Thames Water compound, Ockham, looking east