



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

FOR

JORDANS, SEER GREEN RISING MAIN,

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

SU 9721 9085 - SU 9876 9135

On behalf of

THAMES WATER UTILITIES LTD

AUGUST 2007

REPORT FOR	Thames Water Utilities Ltd Engineering Division (PU002) Gainsborough House Manor Farm Road Reading Berkshire RG2 0JN
PREPARED BY	Gwilym Williams
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ENQUIRES TO	<i>John Moore Heritage Services Hill View Woodperry Road Beckley Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ Tel/Fax 01865 358300 Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk</i>
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Summary

A Watching Brief was carried out on the line of excavation of a Thames Water pipe trench by John Moore Heritage Services. The strip and pipe-trench excavation failed to reveal any significant archaeological remains within the 20m wide corridor.

Two prehistoric flints were found in different locations.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The route is located in the parish of Chalfont St Giles, between Seer Green SPS, at Jordans, Seer Green and a discharge manhole located near to Chalfont Grove, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks. The Seer Green SPS is located at NGR SU 9721 9085 and the discharge manhole is at SU 9876 9135. The drift geology the site is located on is Beaconsfield Gravel, a pre-diversionary ancestral Thames river terrace deposit, at between 75m OD at Seer Green SPS and 100m OD between Jordans and Chalfont Grove. The underlying solid geology is Seafood and Newhaven Chalk, which was not observed during the watching brief.

1.2 Planning Background

Thames Water laid a new rising main in the Seer Green area. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) advised that an archaeological watching brief should be carried out during the work, and prepared a Brief for such work. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* submitted by John Moore Heritage Services detailed how the requirements of the *Brief* would be met. This was approved by BCAS.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site lies in an area of Chiltern District which is not well attested archaeologically. Some prehistoric activity has been identified within c. 500m of the pipeline; a large scatter of Neolithic/ Bronze Age flints were recorded 550m to the south of the route at SU 9840 9077. Large numbers of Mesolithic to Neolithic flints have also been recovered 300m to the north of the route at SU 973 917 (CAS2146, CAS0433, CAS5077, CAS0158). However, trial trenching by Bambi Stainton failed to find any associated features.

A small Roman cremation cemetery consisting of three urns and associated metalwork has been identified 500m to the south of the pipeline route SU 98199090 (CAS5707). The bulk of the route crosses fields of 18th century or pre-18th century irregular enclosure.

The route also crosses through parkland associated with Grove Place Manor (CAS2147). The manor is documented from the 14th century and the extent of probably post-medieval emparkment to the south of the manor is shown on the 1st edition OS map.

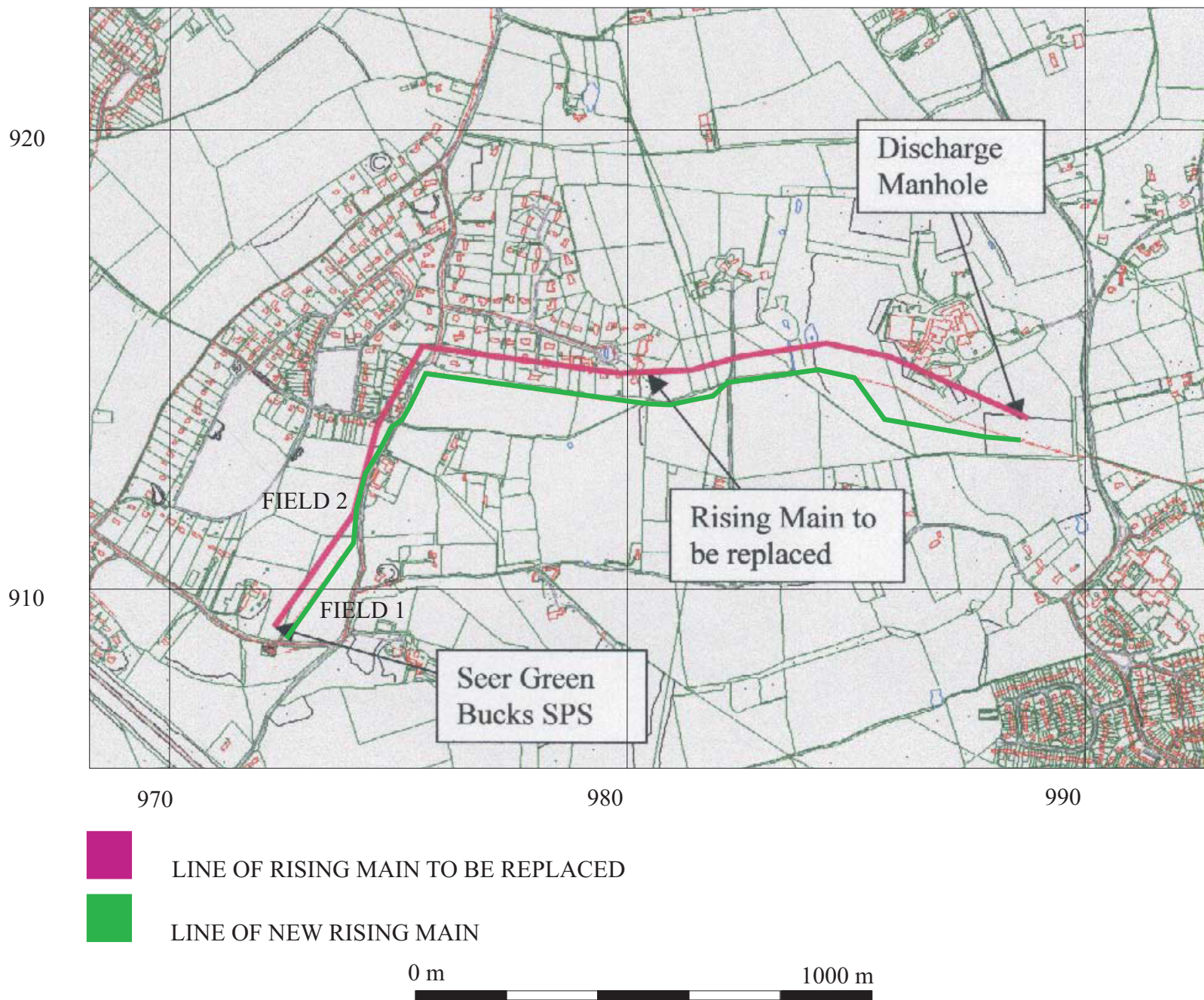


Figure 1. Site location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* were as follows:

- To identify and record any important archaeological remains revealed by the groundworks, paying particular attention for any prehistoric or Roman settlement activity and parkland features associated with Grove Place Manor.
- The results of the investigations will be made public.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record throughout, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist made site-visits between 31st May and 21st June 2007 to monitor the strip of the corridor and the excavation of the pipe-trench by a 13-tonne 360° excavator. The corridor was walked to locate and characterise any archaeological features present.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field results

The topsoil, a mid greyish brown clay loam with c. 5% mixed gravels, was stripped to a depth of c. 0.25m, which was within the subsoil, and was similar to the topsoil but somewhat paler, more gravelly and probably was an old ploughsoil. The underlying Beaconsfield Gravel generally was only exposed where it was cut by the pipe trench. In places slightly deeper stripping revealed the Beaconsfield Gravel. The Beaconsfield gravel comprised bands of sandy gravels or clays and clay gravels. This material was also monitored for archaeological features; none were observed. Within the topsoil occasional pieces of roof tile (which was largely not collected), flint and pot were present. None of the finds could be associated with any archaeological feature.

4.2 Reliability of the results and methodologies

The strip was not carried out to the top of previously undisturbed ground ('natural'), but instead was within the subsoil; as a consequence it remains a possibility that

occasional discrete archaeological features may well have been masked by subsoil. The absence of artefactual evidence is, however, probably indicative of the general state of the archaeological remains within the area of the pipe-trench i.e. an absence of remains.

5 FINDS

5.1 Finds

Fragments of roof tile, one piece of Victorian pottery and two pieces of flint were recovered from the topsoil strip, and cannot be associated with any features.

Three roof tile fragments along the Victorian sherd were observed at SU 97415 91240 – opposite the historic site of Jordans Meeting House. Further roof tile fragments with recently burnt rubbish were seen between SU 98000 91047 and 98007 91047.

5.2 The Flint by Roy Entwistle

The watching brief produced a small and un-stratified flint assemblage, which is composed of two pieces weighing 76 grams. Both pieces are heavily abraded and seem likely to have been derived from secondary gravel deposits, rather than from the chalk which outcrops close to Beaconsfield.

The Assemblage

Field 1, Longbottom Lane: NGR SU 9732 9096

A single re-touched, tertiary flake weighing 38 grams was recovered from this field. The flake is very abraded, carries a number of crudely worked flake scars on its dorsal surface and terminates in a step fracture. The flake has been re-touched on one edge, close to the distal end, to form a notched scraper.

Field 2, Longbottom Lane: NGR SU 9737 9119

The find is a systematically worked cortical blade core weighing 38 grams. It is heavily rolled and bears narrow, parallel blade scars on two surfaces. The blade scars carry white patination.

Conclusion

There is little that can be said of such a small group. Neither piece can be dated with confidence, although the single blade core would not be out of place in a Neolithic or early Bronze Age context. The retouched piece is crudely worked and is more characteristic of a late prehistoric date.

5.3 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken.

6 DISCUSSION

Despite the previous archaeological work carried out in the general area of the pipe-trench, no further archaeological features or activity could be identified within the corridor of the pipe-trench. The apparent under-representation of the area of the site in the County's Sites & Monuments Record may indeed reflect the reality of this part

of the landscape, which until the post-medieval period, was quite poorly settled.

The two flints are most likely casual losses or discard of used implements, each from single activities and are not representing areas of more permanent activity.

The roof tile fragments are just disposal of rubbish and are not associated with a building in the immediate vicinity of their respective findspots.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

The project brief

Written Scheme of Investigation

The project report

The primary site records

Finds

Two flints

The archive has been given an accession number by Buckinghamshire County Museum, 2007:101 where it will be deposited.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1994. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.