



Thames Valley Park Data Centre

Desk Based Heritage Assessment

Prospect Archaeology | On Behalf of FH Trustees
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Thames Valley Park Data Centre

Desk-based Heritage Assessment

Client: FH Trustees

Local Planning Authority: Wokingham Borough Council

Planning Reference: TBC

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CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	2
2.0	SITE DESCRIPTION.....	2
3.0	ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA	2
4.0	BASELINE CONDITIONS	4
5.0	ASSESSMENT.....	8
6.0	CONCLUSIONS	9
7.0	REFERENCES	9
8.0	FIGURES	11
	APPENDIX 1: LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	19
	APPENDIX 2: EVENTS	23
	APPENDIX 3 NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS	24

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of reporting and appropriateness of recommendations. This report is based on information available at the time of writing, from the sources cited. It does not preclude the potential for future discoveries to be made, or for other unidentified sources of information to exist that alter the potential for archaeological impact. Any opinions expressed within this document reflect the honest opinion of Prospect Archaeology. However, the final decision on the need for further work rests with the relevant planning authority.
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List of Figures

Figure 1: Site Location Map (source OS Opendata).....	12
Figure 2 Heritage Assets within 1000m (Berkshire HER)	13
Figure 3 Events within 1000m (Berkshire HER)	14
Figure 4 Previous archaeological investigations within the site (green) and cropmarks (purple).....	15
Figure 5: Ordnance Survey 1979, 1:10,000	16
Figure 6 LiDAR from EA 1m resolution DTM data.....	17
Figure 7 Aerial view of the Site	18

Executive Summary

FH Trustees is proposing the construction of a data centre campus and associated power generation infrastructure on the former Microsoft Office site on land off Thames Valley Park Drive, Thames Valley Park, Reading. Prospect Archaeology Ltd has prepared this desk-based heritage assessment report to consider the implications of the proposed development on the built and buried heritage. Historic environment data and documentary research have provided background information about the history of the Site.

There are 4 designated assets within 1000m of the Site. Bulmershe Manor is a Grade II* Listed Building (NHL1312868) located on the edge of the study area to the southeast along with the Gates and Piers to Bulmershe Manor (NHL1118108) which is Listed Grade II. About 450m to the east of the Site is London Road Bridge (NHL1409249) and c.560m to the northeast is the Barns at Holme Park Farm 200 Metres West of Sonning Lane (NHL1117438); both of these are Grade II Listed Buildings. There is also a Building of Traditional Local Character called South Lodge within the study area. None of these assets share significant intervisibility with the Site and no mitigation is considered necessary in respect of built heritage.

Previous investigations within the Site in the 1980s showed that there was a Low potential for significant remains pre-dating the Middle Iron Age, with the majority of the earlier material occurring in the topsoil and not corresponding to archaeological features.

Middle Iron Age through to later Roman activity was recorded, principally in the form of a ditched enclosure with internal pits and posts holes and external features which were thought to represent the remains of a field system.

There is no evidence that the Site was used for anything other than agriculture through the medieval and post-medieval to modern periods until the Site's development at the end of the 1980s.

The previous investigations involved a series of test pits and trial trenches followed by the archaeological excavation and recording of specific areas. While the evaluation sample size was small compared to modern sampling strategies, evaluation trenches extending beyond the enclosure failed to identify any significant remains beyond the enclosure while an area excavated to the south also produced a very low density of remains. In addition, a subsequent watching brief on topsoil stripping failed to identify any further archaeological remains in the area of the proposed development. There are two principal areas that may not have been disturbed by the previous office development and where archaeological remains may survive, those being the very southeast corner and the southern perimeter, although here disturbance from construction of the railway is highly likely.

On balance it is considered unlikely that significant unknown or unrecorded significant archaeological remains survive within the Site and no further archaeological work is recommended.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Prospect Archaeology Ltd has been appointed by Hilson Moran on behalf of FH Trustees (the Client) to prepare a desk-based heritage assessment to consider the direct and indirect effects on any known or suspected heritage assets of development at Microsoft Campus, Thames Valley Park, Reading, RG6 1WG. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, updated 2017, and Historic England Advice Notes.

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1.1 The Site is located c.3km to the east of Reading town centre within the Thames Valley Park business district at SU 74711 74131. The Site (Figures 1 and 2) is 5.4ha, currently occupied by office buildings and carparking with soft landscaping on the periphery. It is bounded to the north by Microsoft Campus Drive, to the east and west and northeast by further offices, to the west by paddocks and to the south by the Great Western Main Line railway.

2.2 Geology and Topography

- 2.2.1 The Site is formed at various levels. It slopes from the southern boundary at the railway from c.48m aOD to the buildings in the centre of the Site at around 43m aOD. North of the buildings the ground slopes up from c.39m aOD to Microsoft Campus Drive between 40m and 41m. The west of the Site sits on Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation while the east is on Lambeth Group-Clay silt and sand. Overlying these deposits are aeolian Langley Silt Member clay and silt across the northwest, and Kempton Park Gravel Member fluvial sand and gravel reflecting the channels, floodplains and levees of a river through the centre of the Site (<https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk>).

3.0 Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

3.1 Buried Heritage

- 3.1.1 The buried heritage (archaeology) has been considered through desk-based assessment. A full list of referenced sources is provided, and references are given. Staff at Berkshire Archaeology (BA) gave advice and information about known archaeological sites of interest in the vicinity of the study area and provided data from the respective Historic Environment Records (HER), and where relevant, these were further investigated. Material was gathered from previous reports and online where available. Additional sources consulted included:

- information available on a variety of internet sites including, The National Archives (<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>) and the Archaeology Data Service (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/>); and the Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk). A full list of sites accessed can be found in the Bibliography section;
- cartographic sources held by the Ordnance Survey and Promap (www.promap.co.uk);
- A site visit was undertaken.

- 3.1.2 The historical development of the Site has been established through reference to these

sources and is described in the Baseline Conditions section of this report. This has been used to identify areas of potential archaeological interest. Each area of archaeological potential has been assessed for its archaeological significance in geographical terms, although it should be noted that despite the national policy guidance's reliance on geographical significance, there is no statutory definition for these classifications:

- International – cultural properties in the World Heritage List, as defined in the operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention;
- National – sites or monuments of sufficient archaeological/historical merit to be designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Other sites or monuments may also be considered of national importance but not appropriate for scheduling due to current use(s) or because they have not yet been fully assessed.
- Regional – sites and monuments of archaeological or historical merit that are well preserved or good examples of regional types or that have an increased value due to their group associations, regional rarity or historical associations.
- Local – sites and monuments of archaeological or historical interest but that are truncated or isolated from their original context and are of limited use in furthering archaeological or historical knowledge.
- Negligible – areas of extremely limited or no archaeological or historic interest. These commonly include areas of major modern disturbance such as quarries, deep basements etc.

3.1.3 The concluding section of this document summarises the findings and provides an opinion on the potential for archaeological remains to be identified, the likely importance of such remains should they exist and the likely impact of the proposed development. Recommendations for further work are provided.

3.2 Built Heritage

3.2.1 Built heritage includes listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, and scheduled monuments. It also includes non-listed buildings of local architectural or historic interest which are included in the Historic Environment Record. All statutorily protected built heritage assets are of national importance.

3.2.2 The historic built environment is assessed in accordance with the procedures set out in Historic England Advice Notes. Of particular significance in this report is *The Setting of Heritage Assets, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition)* (Historic England 2015). Within this document a staged approach is proposed:

Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected

Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset

Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance

Step 4: explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm

Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

- 3.2.3 Historic England, in the guidance document *Conservation Principles Policies Guidance* (English Heritage 2008) defines the setting of historic assets as:-

the surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape

- 3.2.4 HE draws a distinction between ‘setting’ and ‘context’ (paragraphs 76 and 77) and the document makes it clear that whereas ‘setting’ involves a localised area, ‘context’ is a wider concept involving “*any relationship between a place and other places, relevant to the values of that place*”.

- 3.2.5 Heritage values are considered under four main headings

- Evidential Value derives from the potential for a place to yield evidence about past human activity
- Historical Value derives from the ways in which past, people and events can be connected through a place to the present
- Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
- Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it.

4.0 Baseline Conditions

- 4.1.1 The assessment of existing conditions has been based on a ‘study area’ extending 1000m from the boundary of the proposed development. This enables the significance of existing and potential archaeological features to be considered in their local, regional and national contexts.

- 4.1.2 The source of the assets (Figure 2; Table 1 and Appendix 3) noted in the following text are from the Berkshire Archaeology HER and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) and have the prefixes MWK/MRM and NHL respectively. Known assets within the Site are highlighted in **bold**. Events are prefixed by EWK/ERM. Known and suspected archaeological remains are summarised and discussed in the following sections.

4.2 Designated Heritage Assets

- 4.2.1 There are 4 designated assets within 1000m of the Site and these are listed in Table 1 and shown on Figure 2. Bulmershe Manor is a Grade II* Listed Building (NHL1312868) located on the edge of the study area to the southeast along with the Gates and Piers to Bulmershe Manor (NHL1118108) which is Listed Grade II. About 450m to the east of the Site is London

Road Bridge (NHL1409249) and c.560m to the northeast is the Barns at Holme Park Farm 200 Metres West of Sonning Lane (NHL1117438); both of these are Grade II Listed Buildings. None of these assets share intervisibility with the Site, nor does the Site contribute to their significance.

- 4.2.2 The study area contains one Building of Traditional Local Character (BTLC) as defined in the Wokingham Borough Council Planning Policies and Constraints Map. This is South Lodge on Sonning Lane, c.740m northeast of the Site. The building has no intervisibility with the Site due to intervening vegetation and development.
- 4.2.3 The Site does not fall within any Significant Views with Heritage Interest as defined in the Reading Borough Local Plan, Adopted November 2019.

Table 1: Designated Heritage Assets (and assets of Local significance) within 1000m of the Site

Ref. No	Name / description	Grade
NHL1117438	Barns at Holme Park Farm 200 Metres West of Sonning Lane	II
NHL1118108	Gates and Piers to Bulmershe Manor	II
NHL1312868	Bulmershe Manor	II*
NHL1409249	London Road Bridge (Mnl 13346)	II
	South Lodge, Sonning Lane	BTLC

4.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.3.1 There are 56 non-designated heritage assets recorded in the Berkshire HER within 1km of the Site. There are 78 archaeological events recorded. The Site was included within a series of investigations undertaken in response to an application for gravel extraction and construction of a Business and Country Riverside park in the 1980s (EWK59). A series of hand dug test pits was excavated initially across the Site (2-4, 10, 12, 21-27, 30-1). Machine trenches were excavated across an enclosure and the surrounding area (Trenches A-G) before areas were machine stripped the following year, covering the central northern part of the Site (48) and a smaller area to the south (47) (Fig. 4). A watching brief was also conducted during topsoil stripping (EWK53) which produced only one area of archaeological activity in the northeast area of Trench 48 (Barnes et al. 1997). A watching brief on the installation of a telecommunications mast adjacent to Little Grogs Wood revealed no archaeological remains (EWK649).

Prehistoric Period (10,000BC–600BC)

- 4.3.2 The gravel terraces in this area have produced a considerable number of prehistoric artefacts. A derived Palaeolithic hand axe and a second fragment were found during excavations within the Site (**MWK15531**) and further examples were found in a gravel pit to the east of the Site (MWK1282). Lower Palaeolithic flints were recovered during works on the railway cutting (MWK8893) on the edge of the study area to the east of the Site. A Mesolithic tranche axe was recovered from the River Thames on the edge of the study area to the northeast of the Site (MWK8837). Mesolithic flints were found during excavations c.250m to the northeast of the Site, in association with Early Bronze Age material (MWK15536).

- 4.3.3 A considerable quantity of flint, both worked and natural, was recovered from a poorly defined feature, possibly a working hollow, about 500m to the northwest of the Site and dated to the Mesolithic period (MWK15533). A cattle skeleton was excavated from a river channel during excavation c.180m to the south of the above. Cut marks consistent with a flint blade on the bones suggested a Mesolithic kill site (MWK15532). To the northeast of the Site a significant density of Mesolithic worked flints was found during the excavation of a stream channel, confined to a layer of colluvial silt. The presence of smaller flint chips indicates that much of the material was derived from knapping waste and an industrial rather than a domestic context was inferred (MWK15534).
- 4.3.4 A prehistoric hourglass perforated quartzite pebble mace head was reported in the 1950s, found to the southeast of the Site (MWK8876). A pit containing 3 sherds of Neolithic pottery was found during excavations close to the River Thames to the north of the Site (MWK15535). A gully and pit containing Early Bronze Age pottery were found during excavations less than 100m to the north of the Site (MWK15537). An archaeological evaluation c.530m to the southeast of the Site identified undated ditches and possible sherds of Bronze Age pottery (MRM17613). A pit containing worked flints and Early Bronze Age pottery was recorded in Trench 48 within the Site and further residual material was found in later features. Worked and burnt flints were recovered from the test pits (2, 3, 4 and 26) (Barnes et al. 1997).

Iron Age-Roman Periods (600BC–410AD)

- 4.3.5 Little Gogs Farm is an area of open ground just to the east of the Site. Within this area a series of undated cropmarks have been identified, including linear ditches, trackways, enclosures, and a ring ditch which on morphologically grounds could date to this period (MWK1928-33).
- 4.3.6 An Iron Age coin was found on the banks of the Thames to the northeast of the Site (MWK8867). Another coin has been found on the edge of the study area to the southeast (MWK8875). A sesterius, possibly of Vespasian, was found on a building site to the west of the Site (MWK11304).
- 4.3.7 Archaeological investigations in 1986-88 included trenches and area excavations within the Site. Investigations within the Site uncovered predominantly remains of the Middle Iron Age through into the Roman period. The excavations were primarily concerned with a sub-rectangular settlement enclosure in the northern centre of the Site measuring 62m north-south by 66m west-east, and a maximum ditch width of 4.9m. There was a small spur ditch extending from the north-east corner and one entrance in the centre of the east side. The first phase of the enclosure was dated to the Middle Iron Age (MWK1929). A slot across the entranceway may have been for a gate (MWK15517). The internal features were mostly associated with production and storage rather than representing structural features, though several postholes were recorded and dated to this first phase (MWK15514), including a possible four post structure (MWK15515). Of the fourteen Middle Iron Age pits, one contained a human foetus skeleton and disarticulated animal bones including butchered cattle, sheep/goat and a toad. It had a sealing layer of chalk rubble. Other pits dated to later phases (MWK15513). Isolated ditches of a possible former field system outside the enclosure

were associated with Phase 1 (**MWK15519**): a ditch was recorded running across the contour south of the enclosure (**MWK15520**) and another to the north (**MWK15521**) which were interpreted as a field boundaries.

- 4.3.8 Use of the enclosure continued into the 1st century to early 2nd century AD. Internally there were further pits (**MWK15524**) and postholes and a sinuous gully (**MWK15518**). An alternative gate structure is represented by a posthole and stake holes at the entrance to the enclosure during this phase (**MWK15516**). In the enclosure ditch terminals two features were interpreted as short-lived pottery kilns (**MWK15511** and **MWK15512**). Field boundaries containing 1st-2nd century pottery were recorded to the north of the enclosure (**MWK15522** and **MWK15523**). Small-scale metalworking was suggested by metalworking residues outside the enclosure (**MWK1929**).
- 4.3.9 Phase 3 dated to the middle to late 2nd century AD and was characterised by burial of cremations to the northeast of the Site following abandonment of the enclosure. The cremation groups featured vessels of cremated bone and ancillary vessels (**MWK15525**, **MWK15526** and **MWK15527**). Other charcoal filled features may have also been cremations (**MWK15528**).
- 4.3.10 The last phase dated to the 3rd to 4th century AD and was represented only by finds in upper levels of features indicating a diminished level of activity (**MWK1929**). A pit with charcoal and burnt flint containing later Roman pottery (**MWK15529**) and a circular feature with 3rd-4th century pottery also with charcoal (**MWK15530**) were recorded north of the Site.
- 4.3.11 Pits containing preserved wood and metalworking debris were excavated to the north of the Site (**MWK15538**). These were in association with a group of postholes which may have formed a building (**MWK15539**). Roman pottery was also found on the banks of the River Thames (**MWK8855**) and c.700m northeast of the Site (**MWK8990**).

Early Medieval & Medieval (5th – 16th centuries)

- 4.3.12 The Site lies within the township of Sonning, for which the settlement lay off to the northeast and the township boundary ran along the western edge of the Site. Sonning is mentioned in the Domesday Book under the lands of the Bishop of Salisbury. The manor included meadow and woodland, two mills, five fisheries and a church. The name 'Sonning' derives from the Old English personal name Sunna and means the people of Sunna.
- 4.3.13 The Chapel of Erlegh St. Bartholomew was established in the 12th century and was located c.550m to the south of the Site and was ruinous by 1800 (**MWK4000**).

Post-medieval – Modern Periods (mid-16th – present)

- 4.3.14 Bulmershe Manor to the southeast of the Site is a 16th century house (**NHL1312868**).
- 4.3.15 The Twyford to Kennetmouth section of the Great Western Railway was opened in 1840 (**MWK6039**) and runs along the southern boundary of the Site. The railway bridge to the southwest was also part of the original railway construction and altered in the later 19th century (**MRM16713**). The London Road Overbridge was built at the same time, taking the

A4 across the railway (NHL1409249). The historic route of the A4 also forms part of the modern road alignment at several places locally (MWK5978, MWK5980). A milestone was recorded along a section of the original road alignment in the 1960s (MWK5979). On the eastern limit of the study area is the Warren Road Bridge built in 1890-3 (MRM16667).

4.3.16 To the southwest of the Site lies the site of the Suttons Seeds trial ground started in the 19th century (MRM16531). To the northeast was the site of a 19th century barn (MRM18605).

4.3.17 The Site was agricultural land until the development of the Business Park in the late 1980s.

4.4 Map Regression

Ordnance Survey 1872 (1:2,500) (Not Shown)

4.4.1 The Site comprises an agricultural field.

Ordnance Survey 1979 (1:10,000) (Figure 5)

4.4.2 The Site is still agricultural.

4.5 LiDAR and Site Visit

4.5.1 The LiDAR imagery (Fig. 6) shows little beyond part of an earthwork in the southeast corner of the Site which is probably related to the construction of the railway and has since become part of Little Grog's Wood.

4.5.2 The Historic Landscape Characterisation describes this area as a Modern Business Park and formerly a brickworks (though this did not encroach on the Site) (HRM4647).

5.0 Assessment

5.1 Proposed Development

5.1.1 The proposal is for construction of a data centre campus with associated power generation infrastructure. The scheme will involve the demolition of three existing office buildings and their replacement with a phased development. The precise configuration and phasing strategy are still being explored.

5.2 Designated Heritage Assets

5.2.1 There are no designated assets which will be either directly or indirectly affected by the proposed development. No Significant Views with Heritage Interest will be affected. No mitigation is considered necessary in respect of built heritage.

5.3 Archaeological Potential

5.3.1 The previous investigations within the Site identified several phases of activity from the Middle Iron Age to the Later Roman period, focussed on a ditched enclosure, identified initially as a cropmark, with internal pits and posts holes and external features which were thought to represent the remains of a field system but also included cremation burials. Evidence of earlier material was recovered from the topsoil but did not correspond to archaeological features.

- 5.3.2 There is no evidence that the Site was used for anything other than agriculture through the medieval and post-medieval to modern periods until the Site's development at the end of the 1980s.
- 5.3.3 While there has clearly been previous archaeological mitigation of this Site, the question is whether there is a potential for any further remains to exist and to have survived construction. The investigations did not benefit from the use of modern geophysical survey and the sample size of the evaluation fieldwork was significantly smaller than that usually employed today, focussing instead mainly on areas of known cropmarks and the results of some few test pits. It could be argued, therefore, that there is scope that significant areas of archaeology, particularly discrete features such as pits, postholes or even burials, may not have been detected. However, those evaluation trenches extending beyond the enclosure failed to identify any significant remains and the area 47 to the south also produced a low density of archaeology. In addition, it is stated in the 1997 report that the watching brief on subsequent topsoil stripping failed to identify further archaeological remains. There are also few areas of the Site that have not been subject to development and where archaeological remains could possibly survive, those being the very southeast corner around Little Gogs Wood and the southern perimeter, where disturbance from construction of the railway is highly likely and a nearby watching brief on the construction of a telecoms mast failed to identify any archaeological remains.
- 5.3.4 On balance it is considered that it is unlikely that significant unknown or unrecorded archaeological remains survive within the Site.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1.1 The proposed development will have no direct or indirect impact on any designated asset or Significant View with Heritage Interest.
- 6.1.2 The Site has previously been the subject of archaeological evaluation, excavation and watching brief which recorded a ditched enclosure and activity of Middle Iron Age to Late Roman date. Some evidence for earlier activity was identified through finds in the topsoil but did not relate to buried features. Given the extent of development and the scale of the previous archaeological works it is considered unlikely that any further archaeological remains survive. No further work is recommended.

7.0 References

7.1 Published Documentary Sources

Barnes et al., 1997 *Excavations at Thames Valley Park, Reading, 1986-88, Prehistoric & Romano-British Occupation of the Floodplain & a Terrace of the River Thames*, Wessex Archaeology

DCMS, 2013 *Scheduled Monuments & nationally important but non-scheduled monuments*, Department for Culture Media and Sport

Martin, G, G, & Williams, A, 2003 *Domesday Book. A Complete Translation*

7.2 Cartographic / Archival Sources

Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 1872

Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 1979

7.3 Digital Sources

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/>

<http://environment.data.gov.uk/ds/survey/index.jsp#/survey>

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

<https://opendomesday.org>

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

<http://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/coalauthority/home.html>

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>

<https://www.old-maps.co.uk>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>

www.pastscape.org/homepage/

<http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk>

8.0 Figures

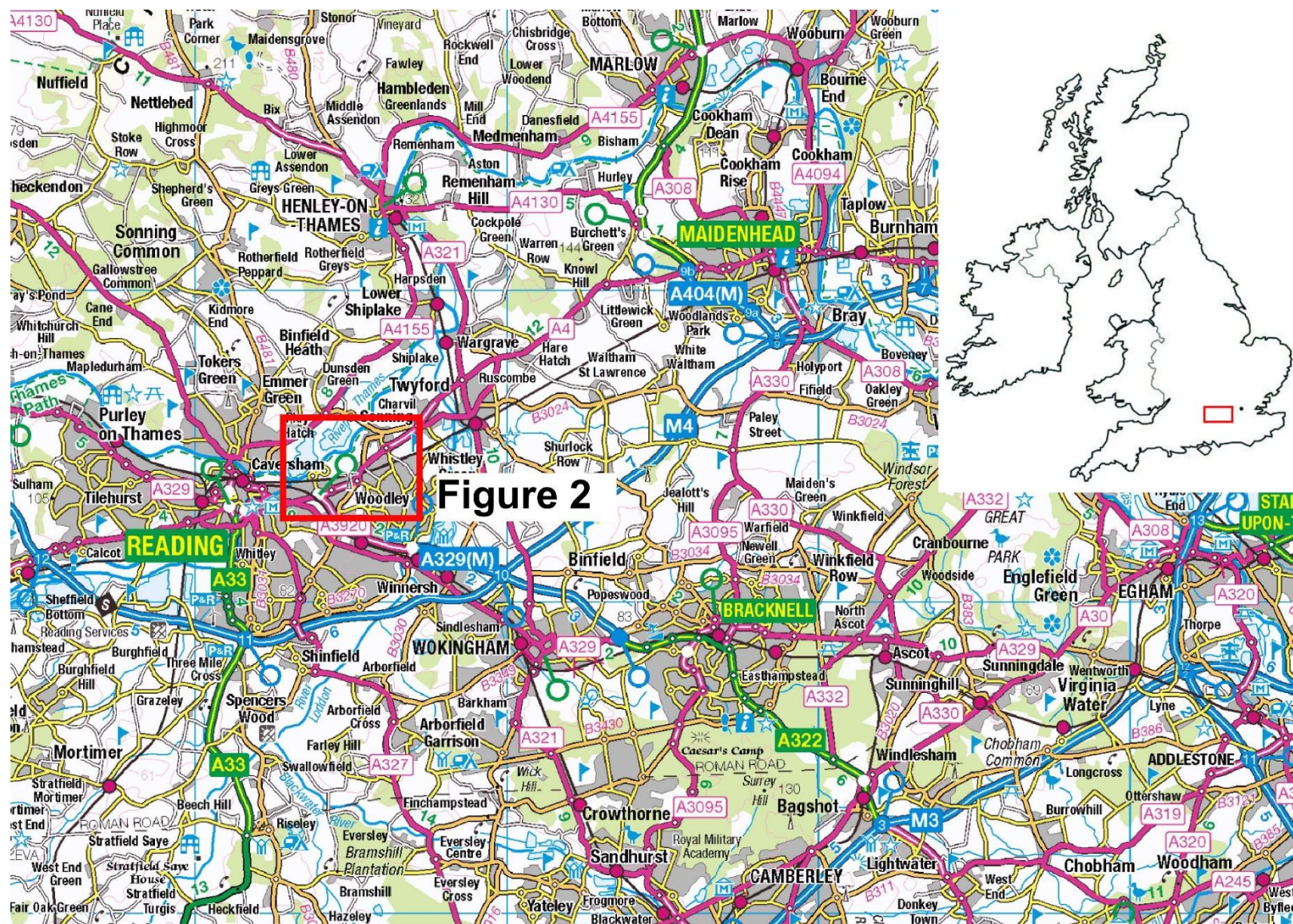


Figure 1: Site Location Map (source OS Opendata)



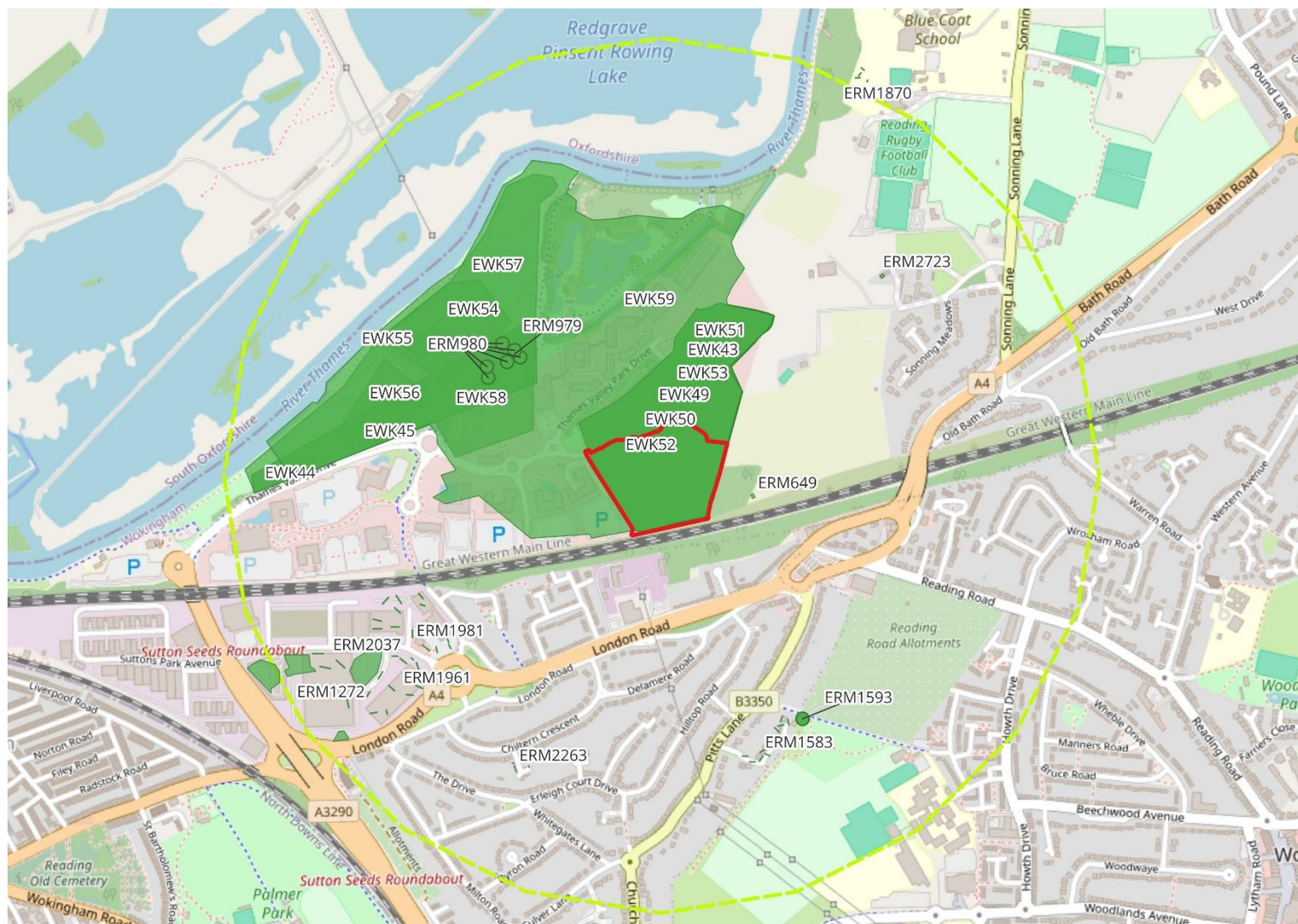


Figure 3 Events within 1000m (Berkshire HER)

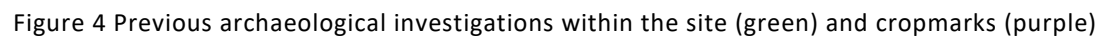




Figure 5: Ordnance Survey 1979, 1:10,000



Figure 6 LiDAR from EA 1m resolution DTM data



Figure 7 Aerial view of the Site

Appendix 1: Legislation and Planning Policy Context

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (AMAAA)

The Act is the primary legislation protecting archaeological remains within the United Kingdom. It identifies as a duty of the Secretary of State the need to compile and maintain a schedule of ancient monuments of national importance, to allow for their preservation, so far as possible, in their current (at the time of scheduling) state.

A statement setting out current Government policy on the identification, protection, conservation and investigation of nationally important (both scheduled and nationally important non-scheduled) ancient monuments was published in October 2013 (DCMS 2013).

Where works to scheduled monuments are proposed for development-related purposes, the Secretary of State has particular regard to the following principles:

Only in wholly exceptional cases will consent be granted for works could result in substantial harm to, or loss of, the significance of a Scheduled Monument; and

In cases that would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a Scheduled Monument the harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (DCMS 2013, para 20).

This legislative position is directly reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that “Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss...” (NPPF, para 214), and “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use” (NPPF, para 215).

Where consent is granted for works that could result in harm to, or loss of, the significance of a Scheduled Monument, conditions are expected to be imposed that provide for recording of information that adds to our understanding of the significance of that monument. Those conditions are likely to be designed to ensure that:

- the project design seeks to further the objectives of relevant international or national research frameworks;
- use is made of appropriately skilled teams with the resources to fully implement the project design to relevant professional standards (such as those published by the Institute for Archaeologists);
- the project design provides for the full analysis, publication and dissemination of the results, including the deposition of reports in the relevant Historic Environment Record (HER), to a set timetable; and
- provision is made in the project design for the conservation and deposition of the site archive with a local museum or other public depository willing to receive it (DCMS 2013, para 21).

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) highlights the importance of built heritage and Listed Buildings within the planning system. With regard to the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) duty regarding listed buildings in the planning process, it states that:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”.

In addition, Section 72 of the Act emphasises the value of Conservation Areas in built heritage planning. In relation to the duties and powers of the LPA, it provides that:

“With respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Aug 2026

The policies included in Chapter 20 commence with those relating to plan-making (HE1-HE3) and are not relevant to this assessment.

Policy HE4 recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and that they “should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance”. It further states

“Any harm to, or loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset (including from development within its setting) should have a clear and convincing justification in accordance with the policies in this chapter”.

Policy HE5 sets out how the effect on the significance of heritage assets (including any contribution made by their setting) is assessed. Effects are categorised as:

- Positive
- No effect
- Harm
- Substantial harm
- Total loss

No distinction is drawn between designated and non-designated heritage assets in assessing harm.

Policy HE6 deals with proposals affecting designated heritage assets and requires substantial weight to be given to an asset’s conservation, based on the importance of the asset. Where harm would occur, the public benefit of the proposal is weighed against the level of harm to determine whether a proposal can be approved. Alternatively, it may be accepted if there is no viable alternative future use and the asset would otherwise be lost. A distinction is drawn between the significance of Grade II listed buildings / registered parks and gardens and other designated heritage assets which are of the highest significance: scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites.

HE7 relates to non-designated heritage assets and again requires a balanced judgement to be made between the significance of the asset and the level of harm.

Policies HE6 and HE7 both require proposals that would enhance or better reveal heritage assets to be supported.

Policy HE8 deals specifically with World Heritage Sites and is not relevant to this assessment.

Policy HE9 provides protection for Conservation Areas. This policy recognises that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance but provides protection for those elements that do contribute to significance, in line with policies HE5 and HE6.

Policy HE10 provides for the loss or removal of heritage assets, ensuring that proposals will proceed following the loss of an asset, and that heritage assets will be recorded in advance of their loss and the evidence produced through this record appropriately disseminated.

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2014 and provides guidance for planners and communities which will help deliver high quality development and sustainable growth in England. In terms of heritage, guidance entitled 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out information with respect to the following:

- what the main legislative framework for planning and the historic environment is (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; and Protection of Wrecks Act 1973);
- a definition of 'significance';
- why significance is important in decision-taking;
- the considerations of designated and non-designated assets;
- the identification of non-designated heritage assets; and
- the considerations for when applications for planning permission are required to consult or notify Historic England.

Non-Statutory Guidance

Historic England Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance (EH 2008) defines the setting of historic assets as:-

"...the surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape..."

EH draws a distinction between 'setting' and 'context' (paragraphs 76 and 77) and the document makes it clear that whereas 'setting' involves a localised area, 'context' is a wider concept involving "any relationship between a place and other places, relevant to the values of that place".

- Heritage values are considered under four main headings
- Evidential Value derives from the potential for a place to yield evidence about past human activity
- Historical Value derives from the ways in which past, people and events can be connected through a place to the present
- Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
- Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it.

Local Policy Guidance

The *Wokingham Borough Development Plan* was adopted in February 2014 has the following policies relating to the historic environment and the Site:

Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)

- 1. Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas are shown on the Policies Map.*
- 2. The Borough Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by:*
 - a. Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.*
 - b. Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.*
- 3. Proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme.*

Policy TB25: Archaeology

- 1. Areas of high archaeological potential are shown on the Policies Map.*
- 2. In areas of high archaeological potential, applicants will need to provide a detailed assessment of the impact on archaeological remains.*
- 3. Where development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area which is likely to contain archaeological remains, the presumption is that appropriate measures shall be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ. Where this is not practical, applicants shall provide for excavation, recording and archiving of the remains.*

Policy TB26: Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character

- 1. Areas of Special Character are shown on the Policies Map.*
- 2. Planning permission will only be granted for proposals to or affecting Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting.*
- 3. Proposals that involve the demolition of a Building of Traditional Local Character will require strong justification.*

Appendix 2: Events

Ref No.	Description
ERM979	Thames Valley Park Lake (W453), Berkshire, Environmental Sampling
ERM980	Thames Valley Park Lake (W453), Berkshire, Test Pits
EWK43	Thames Valley Business and Country Park, Reading Trench Evaluation
EWK44	Thames Valley Business and Country Park, Reading Trench Evaluation
EWK45	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Auger Survey
EWK49	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Topographic Survey
EWK50	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Geochemical Survey
EWK51	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Trench Evaluation
EWK52	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Excavation
EWK53	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Watching Brief
EWK54	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Trench Evaluation
EWK55	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Excavation
EWK56	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Trench Evaluation
EWK57	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Watching Brief
EWK58	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Excavation
EWK59	Thames Valley Park, Reading, Evaluation/Excavation
ERM649	Little Gogs, Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire, Watching Brief
ERM1272	Unit 24, Suttons Business Park, London Road, Reading, Berkshire, Trench Evaluation
ERM1583	34-50 Pitts Lane, Earley, Reading, Berkshire, Trench Evaluation
ERM1593	34 Pitts Lane, Earley, RG6 1BT, Desk-based Assessment
ERM1870	Phase 3 at Reading Blue Coat School, Holme Park, Sonning Lane, Sonning, Berkshire, Trench Evaluation
ERM1961	Planning Application Site A, Suttons Park Avenue, Reading - Archaeological Evaluation
ERM1981	Planning Application Site B, Suttons Park Avenue, Reading, Trench Evaluation
ERM2037	Units 27-28 Suttons Park Avenue, Reading, Trench Evaluation
ERM2263	38 Chiltern Crescent, Earley, Reading, Berkshire. Archaeological Evaluation
ERM2723	Barn at Bank Cottage, Holme Park Farm Lane, Sonning - Building Recording

Appendix 3 Non-designated Heritage Assets

HER No.	Name / description	Period / date
MWK1282	Palaeolithic handaxes recovered from a gravel pit at Shepherds Hill, Berkshire	Lower Palaeolithic to Modern
MWK1928	Cropmark features - Little Gogs Farm, Sonning, Berkshire	Unknown
MWK1929	Enclosure at Thames Valley Park (Little Gogs), Berkshire	Middle Iron Age to Roman
MWK1930	Cropmark linear features - Sonning, Berkshire	Unknown
MWK1931	Cropmark enclosures or land parcels at Little Gogs Farm, Sonning, Berkshire	Unknown
MWK1932	Cropmark hut circle? at Little Gogs Farm, Sonning, Berkshire	Unknown
MWK1933	Cropmark of double ditched linear feature-Little Gogs Farm, Sonning, Berkshire	Unknown
MWK4000	The Chapel of Erleigh St. Bartholomew, Earley, Wokingham, Berkshire	Medieval to Unknown
MWK5978	A4 Bath Road	Post Medieval to Modern
MWK5979	Milestone on A4 near Earley, Berkshire	Post Medieval
MWK5980	Section of A4 Bath Road-Sonning, Berkshire	Post Medieval to Modern
MWK6039	Twyford Station to Kennetmouth, Reading, Berkshire	Post Medieval to Modern
MWK8837	Tranchet axe heads - River Thames at Sonning, Berkshire	Mesolithic
MWK8855	Roman pot - River Thames at Sonning, Berkshire	Roman
MWK8867	Iron Age coin - Sonning, Berkshire	Iron Age
MWK8875	Late Iron Age coin - Woodley, Berkshire	Late Iron Age
MWK8876	A prehistoric quartzite pebble mace head - Woodley, Wokingham, Berkshire.	Early Prehistoric
MWK8990	Roman findspot - Sonning, Berkshire	Roman
MWK8893	Lithics from Sonning Cutting, near Sonning Hill, Sonning, Berkshire	Lower Palaeolithic
MWK11304	Coin found on 'Ideal Casements' building site in Reading, Berkshire	Late Iron Age to Roman
MWK15511	Roman kiln at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15512	Roman kiln at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15513	Middle Iron Age - Roman pits at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Middle Iron Age to Roman
MWK15514	Post holes at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Middle Iron Age to Roman
MWK15515	Iron Age structure at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Middle Iron Age to Late Iron Age
MWK15516	Roman post holes and stake-holes at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15517	Feature at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Middle Iron Age to Roman
MWK15518	Roman linear feature at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman

HER No.	Name / description	Period / date
MWK15519	Possible field system at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Middle Iron Age to Roman
MWK15520	Iron Age ditch at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Middle Iron Age to Late Iron Age
MWK15521	Iron Age ditch at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Middle Iron Age to Late Iron Age
MWK15522	Roman ditch at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15523	Roman ditch at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15524	Early Romano-British pit at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15525	Roman cremations at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15526	Roman cremations at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15527	Roman cremations at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15528	Charcoal feature - Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Unknown
MWK15529	Roman pit feature at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15530	Roman circular feature at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Roman
MWK15531	Handaxes at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Palaeolithic
MWK15532	Mesolithic kill site and former river channel at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Upper Palaeolithic to Roman
MWK15533	Mesolithic feature at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Mesolithic
MWK15534	Worked flint scatter at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Mesolithic
MWK15535	Neolithic pit at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Late Neolithic
MWK15536	Beaker burial within a Mesolithic flint scatter at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Early Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age
MWK15537	EBA pit and gully at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Late Neolithic to Middle Bronze Age
MWK15538	Late Iron Age/Romano-British industrial activity pits at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire	Late Iron Age to Roman
MWK15539	Possible Late Iron Age/Romano-British building at Thames Valley Park, Reading	Late Iron Age to Roman
MRM16531	Suttons Seeds Trial Grounds - London Road, Earley, Berkshire	Post Medieval to Modern
MRM16667	GWR Warren Road Bridge, Sonning, Berkshire	Post Medieval
MRM16713	Shepherds House Lane Underbridge, Earley, Berkshire	Post Medieval
MRM17613	Undated linear features and possible Bronze Age sherds at rear of 34-50 Pitts Lane, Earley, Reading, Berkshire	Bronze Age
MRM18605	Barn at Bank Cottage, Holme Park Farm Lane, Sonning	Post Medieval