



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**OF THE**

**NASH LEE RISING MAIN,**

**TERRICK,**

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**SP 8350 0760 to SP 8430 0820**

*On behalf of*

*Thames Water Utilities Ltd.*

**January 2007**

**REPORT FOR** Thames Water Utilities Ltd.  
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Reading Bridge  
Reading  
Berkshire

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## ***Summary***

*A watching brief was carried out by John Moore Heritage Services during the excavation of a pipe trench by Murphy's on behalf of Thames Water. Evidence for ridge and furrow fields was observed during machining across modern fields. Possible evidence was recovered for traces of the historic route known as the Icknield Way.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The route commenced at the pumping station located at SP 8430 0820 on Nash Lee Road, B4009 and ran westwards along the road to the junction with the A4010, and Chalkshire Road. It then crossed Chalkshire Road and ran through land south of the A4010 to a discharge manhole at SP 8350 0760. The pipeline was installed using an open cut trench technique. The geology is varied with deposits of Upper Greensand in the east and Lower Chalk to the west.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Thames Water laid a new rising main along the Nash Lee Road (B4009) and in land adjacent to the Risborough Road (A4010). Due to the archaeological potential of the area, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) advised that an archaeological watching brief should be carried out during the work in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains of significance, and prepared a Brief for such work. A Written Scheme of Investigation outlined the method by which the archaeological work would be carried out in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains of significance.

### **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

The site is located on the south sides of Nash Lee Road (east of Risborough Road), B4009, and Aylesbury Road or Risborough Road, A4010, between NGR SP 8430 0820 and SP 8350 0760, along the line of the Lower Icknield Way. Part of the pipeline was located along the course of the Nash Lee Road (B4009). The geology to the east of Risborough Road is Upper Greensand and Gault while to the west it is Lower Chalk. The site lies on ground rising from east to west between 111m OD over 120m OD.

The site lies at the foot of the chalk along the line of the supposed prehistoric route, the Icknield Way, believed to connect East Anglia with Wessex. The area in the vicinity of the site has evidence reasonably good quantities of archaeological remains since the 19<sup>th</sup> century comprising finds from the Mesolithic to the Saxon.

The parish of Ellesborough evidences flint tools from the Mesolithic and Neolithic and a burial from the latter period (Farley, 1994). Additionally finds of a Mesolithic blade and Neolithic scraper come from a field (2509) just to the south of the proposed line of the rising main.

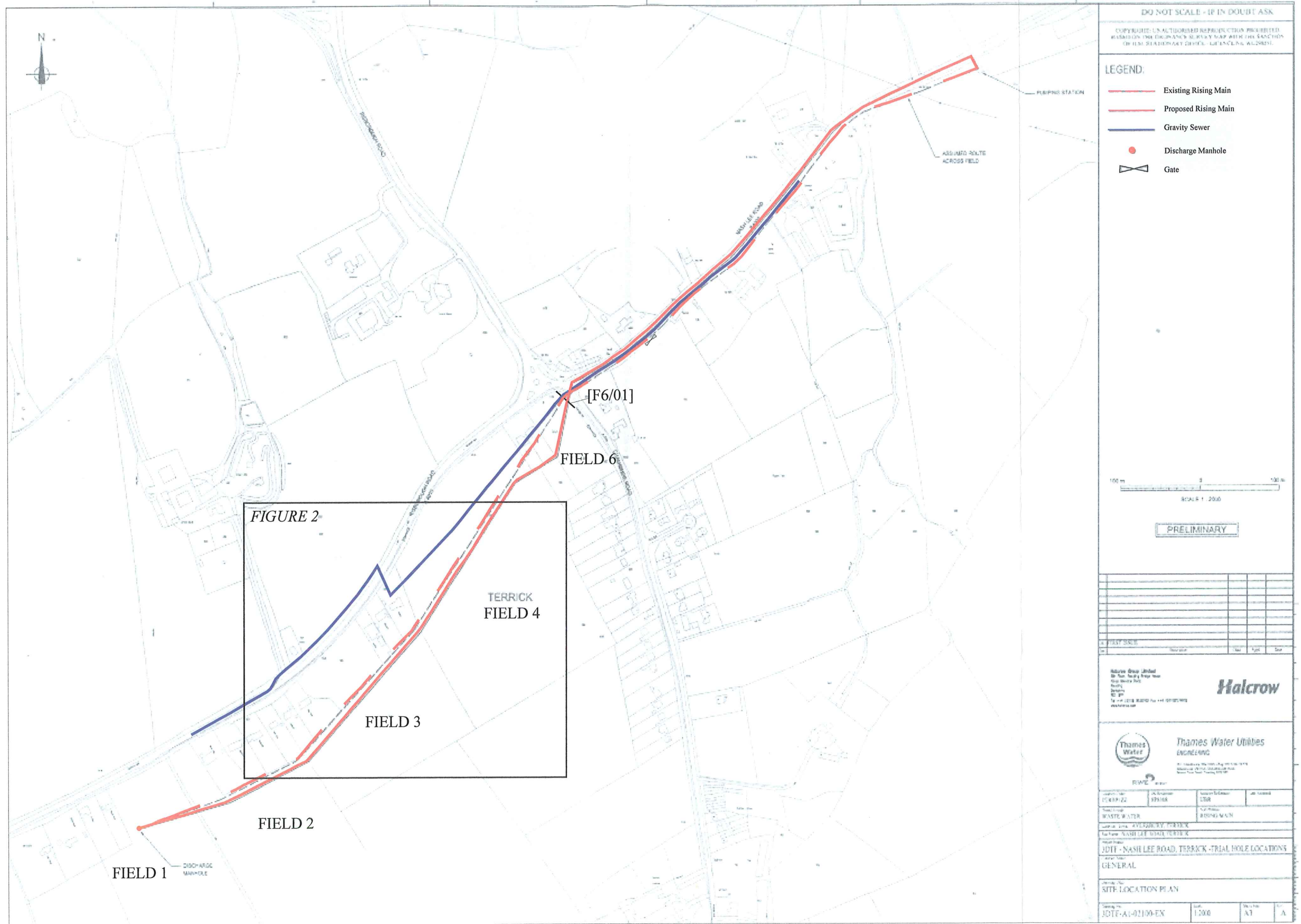


Figure 1. Site location

Little has been found in the parish from the Bronze Age, only a bronze razor from Ellesborough Warren, although it is possible that a barrow stood on Coombe Hill to the south of the line of the site (Farley, 1994), although Late Bronze Age pottery was found in a field to the north of the proposed site (5747). Extensive Iron Age remains have been found in the county and the parish. In the immediate area of Terrick Late Iron Age urn fragments have been found at several locations (0902), (0927) and (2946).

Roman and Romano-British remains are also well-represented. During the late 1850s an amateur excavation carried out by JS Stone revealed a Roman villa to the east of Risborough Road, in King's Field opposite Terrick House (0902), north of the line of the rising main. Although not very satisfactorily excavated, a plan was drawn showing a typical small villa with finds evidencing a hypocaust system and tessellated floor. Finds also included coins and pottery, it seems to have remained in use till the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Farley, 1994). Nothing can be seen of the site today. It was at the time located under medieval ridge and furrow, which has since been ploughed out. K Branigan reported further finds from the field in the late 60s (Branigan, 1967).

To the east of the Risborough Road pottery was found during fieldwalking (5747), which ranged in date from the 1<sup>st</sup> to late 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. To the south of Nash Lee Road, Roman pottery and some metalwork has been found during fieldwalking by Mrs M Hall (2509) and (2576). In the latter field Mrs Hall believed there to have been a possibly peaty deposit associated with the finds. The line of the Roman road is held to lie south of Risborough and Nash Lee Roads (Margary, 1967).

The Roman road is, broadly speaking, commensurate with the Icknield Way. Traditionally this has been seen as a prehistoric road linking East Anglia with the Wessex heartlands. While the Upper Icknield Way runs along the chalklands of the Chilterns, and transforms into the Ridgeway in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, the Lower Icknield Way, as its name suggests, runs along the base of the highlands where the chalk runs out into, in the case of Terrick, the Greensand and Gault. Much has been written concerning its prehistory. What is certain is that it only first appears in medieval literature in Henry of Huntingdon's 12<sup>th</sup> century *Historia Anglorum* (Harrison, 2003: 1). Alan Cooper (1998) argues that the road is a 'twelfth-century myth' (ibid. 237) deliberately associated with the Roman roads Watling Street, Ermine Street and Fosse Way. Anglo-Saxon mentions of the Icknield Way locate it to the west of the current site – between Risborough and Wanborough (Harrison, 2004: 8).

Archaeological work carried out on the Icknield Way has been surprisingly limited over the years. Excavations at Wilbury Hill near Letchworth (Herts.), through which the road is supposed to run failed to examine the route itself (Harrison, 2003: 11). Harrison cites further work questioning the road's date; in particular work by RPS on Aston Clinton bypass, (Bucks.) reports evidence demonstrating a post-Roman, or Saxon, date for the Lower Icknield Way. Work carried out east of Cambridge on Devil's Dyke, Fleam Dyke, Brent Ditch and Heydon or Bran Ditch also raise questions regarding the existence of a prehistoric or post-Roman route.

North of Nash Lee Road in the south of King's Field St Neots Ware and other late Saxon/early medieval pottery was found (0902) in the 1850s, as well as a late Saxon strap end more recently (5328). The absence of any earlier Saxon pottery from the

immediate area would seem to confirm that Chalkshire south of Terrick may have been the focus of Saxon occupation (Farley, 1994).

The parish of Ellesborough developed somewhat unusually, as the main foci of activity are Butler's Cross, Chalkshire and Terrick: all on the east of the parish and at a distance from the parish church. In Domesday Ellesborough is recorded as *Esenberge*, 'the ass-hill'. Terrick does not feature as a place name until 1533, when it is recorded as Tirrock, by 1629 it is recorded as Thurrock mutating to Terwick (1766) on the Jefferys map and Turwick (1825) on the OS. It is generally held to be a '-wic' place name since the EPNS published Place Names of Buckinghamshire in 1925, although the precise meaning has not been advanced. Nash Lee is recorded as Nashley Greene in 1629 (Nashleyfield in 1706) and Lalega in 1199. It is held to mean 'ash-tree clearing'. At the west end of the line of the rising main is 'Vineyard Field' and 'Blackhill Field' – the latter presumably referring to the colour of the soil.

The medieval evidence from Terrick focuses on the moated sites, of which there are three. These also in two cases, at least, have good supporting evidence for leats and ponds. Medieval pottery has been found north and west of Nashlee Farm (2947) and (2946) by Mrs Hall, as well as to the west of Grove Farm (5747). To the south of Nash Lee Road possible house platforms were observed (2509); these comprised five mounds some capped with flint others with chalk lump. Mrs Hall believed them to be late prehistoric, though later researchers have preferred to identify them as medieval. The large quantity of post-medieval pipe bowls might indicate an even later date.

On the 1629 map the Icknield Way is called Acknell Streete. Many of the fields abutting it are shown as strips, and enclosure only occurred in 1805, shown on the 1805 Inclosure Map. The medieval settlement of Terrick is split between the three moated sites, which exist in close proximity to one another and confuse identification somewhat.

To the north of the present village of Terrick, on the west side of Risborough Road, and north of the junction with Nash Lee and Chalkshire Roads, is located Terrick House, an 18<sup>th</sup> century structure with some later additions. A moated site (0393) exists in the grounds of the house and is a scheduled ancient monument (SAM 32116); it comprises a small water-filled rectangular homestead moat now forming a garden feature. There is a pond 30m northeast of the moated site. The Lily map of 1629 appears to show it located off the Risborough Road and referred to as Thurrock. It may well be the Manor of Grove or Seyton's Manor, subinfeudated before 1166, although a case has also been made for the moated site at Grove Farm.

West of Terrick House is Grove Farm, also a scheduled ancient monument (SAM 32115). A recent watching brief undertaken by Oxford Archaeology (Mumford, 2004) failed to locate any archaeological remains west of the present house, itself west of the SAM. The moated site is pear-shaped measuring 70m north/south and a maximum of 46m east/west. As noted above it has been argued that this moated site is the house known as Seaton's or Seyton's Manor. Certainly it is now known as Grove Farm, leading to its identification with the Manor of Grove. A 17<sup>th</sup> century dovecote stands on the island, and the farm buildings also date from the same time.

To the east of the Manor of Grove is the hamlet of Nash Lee, now dominated by Nashlee Farm, where a moated site exists on the south side of the road. This site is

believed to have been the original location of Seyton's Manor, though equally may refer to the 'lost' manor of Mordaunts. There is a fishpond to the north of the moated site.

It is clear that of the three moated sites extant, there are reasonable grounds to associate them with the buildings visible on the Lily map of 1629. However, only the moated site near to Nashlee Farm is near to the proposed line of the rising main. This was in orchards on the 1885 OS map, surveyed in 1877-78. The field in the southwest corner of Chalkshire Road and Risborough Road is marked as Stoney Field on the 1805 Inclosure Map and the 1805 Tithe Map. On the Ellesborough Estate map of the same year it is shown as subdivided into a strip along the road back to Terrick and a larger field to the west, with a narrow strip to the south of the small strip. By contrast the Lily map of 1629 shows all of Stoney Field under strip cultivation, presumably as open field, with Seaton's Butts to the west. This piece of land was presumably part of Seyton's manor.

The A4010 and B4009 follow the line of the old Wycombe to Aylesbury turnpike. The Terrick extension was authorised in 1817 and a tollgate was erected in 1827 (Hanley 1994).

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

- To identify and record remains associated with the Lower Icknield Way.

The results of the investigations will be made public.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services (BCAS) issued a Brief for the work, which John Moore Heritage Services carried out to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with BCAS.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

### **3.2 Methodology**

An archaeologist monitored the excavation of the trench for the pipeline. While the trenching was carried out through the fields monitoring was undertaken daily. When

excavation of the section along the road commenced, monitoring was conducted at the crossroads of Chalkshire Road and Nash Lee Road, and at points along Nash Lee Road which were determined to be more archaeologically sensitive, based on the proximity of known SMR activity.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate.

#### **4 RESULTS (Figures 2 & 3)**

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [ ] indicate features i.e. cuts, although is also used for the grouping of modern cuts and fills; while numbers in ( ) show historic feature fills or deposits of material. During monitoring the context record was assigned a field number according to which field from west to east it was derived (Fig. 1). F1 indicates the westernmost field in which the discharge manhole is located. No Field 5 was recorded.

##### **Fields 1 and 2**

Field 1 was identified as an allotment in Stoney Field on the 1805 Tithe Map, the 1805 Inclosure Map, which had been released from the glebe under the Land Tax Redemption Act. No field name was given on the 1805 Ellesborough Estate Map.

Field 2 was also identified as an allotment and part of the glebe on the 1805 Tithe Map, which had been released under the Land Tax Redemption Act. It was part of Seatons Butts on the 1629 Lily map of the Parish of Ellesborough. No field name was given on the 1805 Ellesborough Estate Map.

The Greensand (F1/04) and (F2/04) was the lowest deposit encountered in these two fields. This natural deposit was cut by the trench for the existing rising main (F1/03) and (F2/03). The trench was sealed by subsoil (F1/02) greenish grey sandy clay with c. 20% flint inclusions, and (F2/02) grey brown clay with 15-20% flint inclusions. Overlying this was the topsoil (F1/01) and (F2/01), dark grey brown clay loam up to 0.2m thick containing up to 20% flint inclusions.

##### **Field 3**

Field 3 was identified as an allotment in Stoney Field. On the 1629 Lily map, this field and those to the east are shown with lines indicating ridge and furrow.

The bottom of the sequence was natural Greensand (F3/05). Overlying the Greensand were the remnants of five furrows and associated ridges running north/south [F3/04]. The furrows were c. 2.5m wide and 0.5m deep, the ridges were c. 7.5m wide and 0.2m thick. Sealing the ridge and furrow was subsoil (F3/03) and (F3/02). These differed slightly in character. To the west it was firm mid brown grey clay with c. 20% flint and with chalk and charcoal flecking (F3/03). To the east, it was light brownish grey clay with c. 15% flint and only occasional flecks of chalk and charcoal (F3/02). Sealing this was the topsoil (F3/01), which is the same as observed in Fields 1 and 2.

It is possible that the difference between (F3/03) and (F3/02) indicates the proximity of the chalk, even though the trench cut through the Greensand, as it is known that the break between the two geologies is not sharp, but rather ripples from east to west.

Although the ridge and furrow [F3/04] observed was not oriented east/west as shown on the 1629 Lily map, the late enclosing of the fields at Terrick might conceal a pattern of changing direction over time of the ridge and furrow. While it is possible that the ridge and furrow observed is late or post- medieval, it is equally likely that it is early modern and dates from shortly before the enclosure of Stoney Field.

#### **Field 4**

Field 4 was identified as an allotment in Stoney Field on the Tithe and Inclosure Maps of 1805. On the 1629 Lily map, this field is shown with lines indicating ridge and furrow.

The natural Greensand (F4/06) was observed, as in the other fields along the pipeline trench. The Greensand fell to the east. Sealing the Greensand was a layer of slightly firm pale grey sandy clay (F4/05). It contained some large flint nodules and chalk flecking; marked light orangey brown staining was localised. The deposit varied in depth from 0.2 - 0.4m thick. The staining appears to have been associated with the ploughed out remains of ridge and furrow.

At the west end of the stripped area, a north/south linear feature [F4/04] was observed. This feature contained light grey brown clay with c. 50% chalk pea grit and c. 15% flint. It was c. 5m wide and 0.15 – 0.2m thick. It is interpreted as more ridge and furrow, as seen in Field 3.

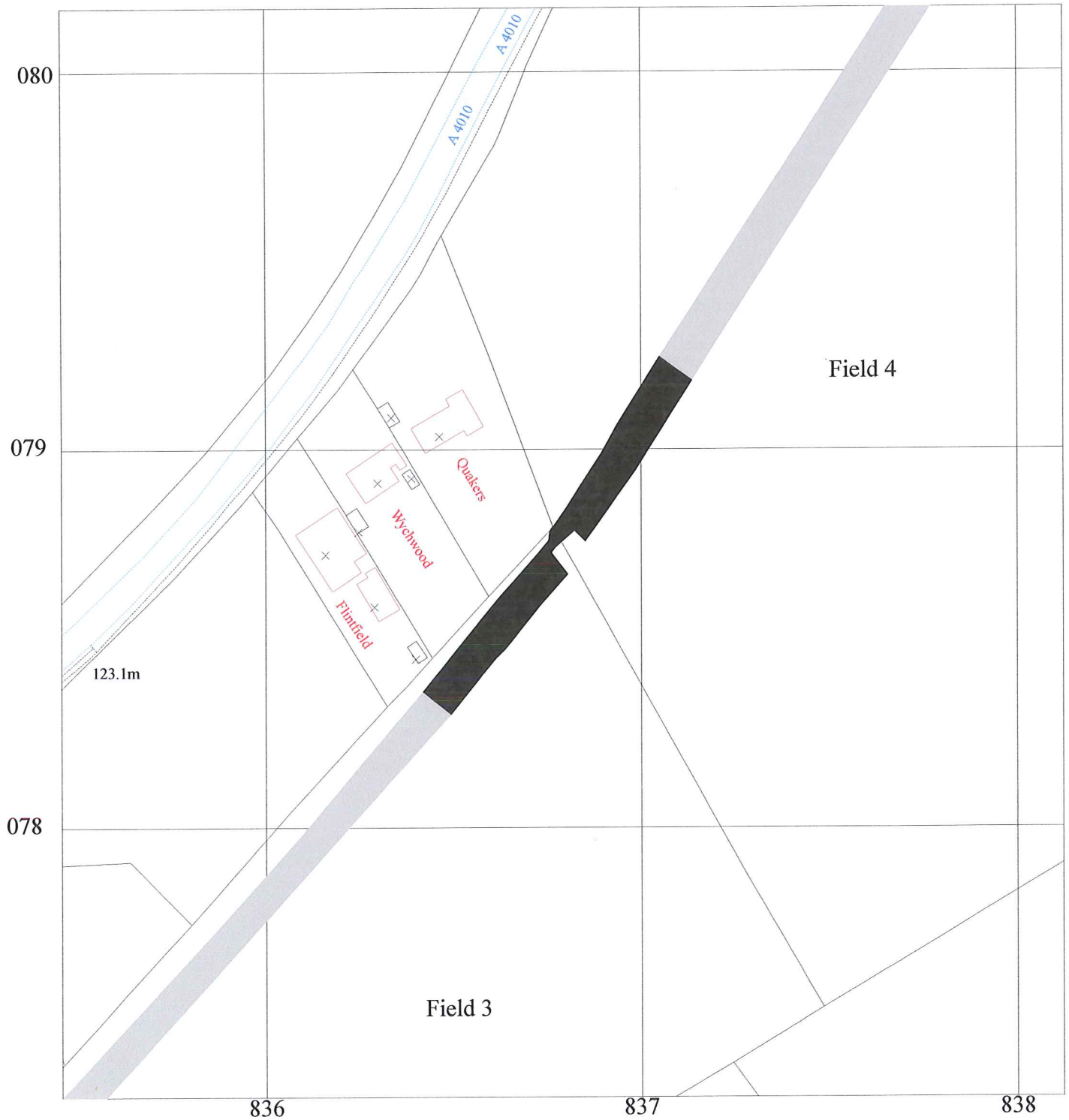
To the east of the ridge and furrow [F4/03] was an area of disturbance. This has not proved easy to interpret, but is believed to be the line of the historic Icknield Way. It comprised light greenish grey sandy clay containing a mix of c. 50% Greensand rock fragments with 5 - 10% flint. It measured approximately 18m east/west and was 0.15m thick.

Overlying the putative remains of the Icknield Way was the subsoil (F4/02), firm greenish grey clay with c. 15% flint, and sealing the subsoil was the topsoil (F4/01), as seen in the other fields.

#### **Field 6**

Field 6 was identified as an allotment in Stoney Field on the 1805 Tithe and Inclosure Maps, but as a distinct enclosed field on the Ellesborough Estate map of 1805. On the 1629 Lily map, this field is shown with lines indicating ridge and furrow.

The only archaeological feature observed in this field, Horse Field, was a north/south oriented ditch [F6/01] measuring 1.4m wide and 0.8m deep (Fig. 1). It was filled by grey chalky clay in the bottom 0.45m which was sealed with mid brown clay loam, c 0.35m thick, which was the same as the ploughsoil. It was sealed by the topsoil.



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Figure 2. Detailed location plan (see figure 3)

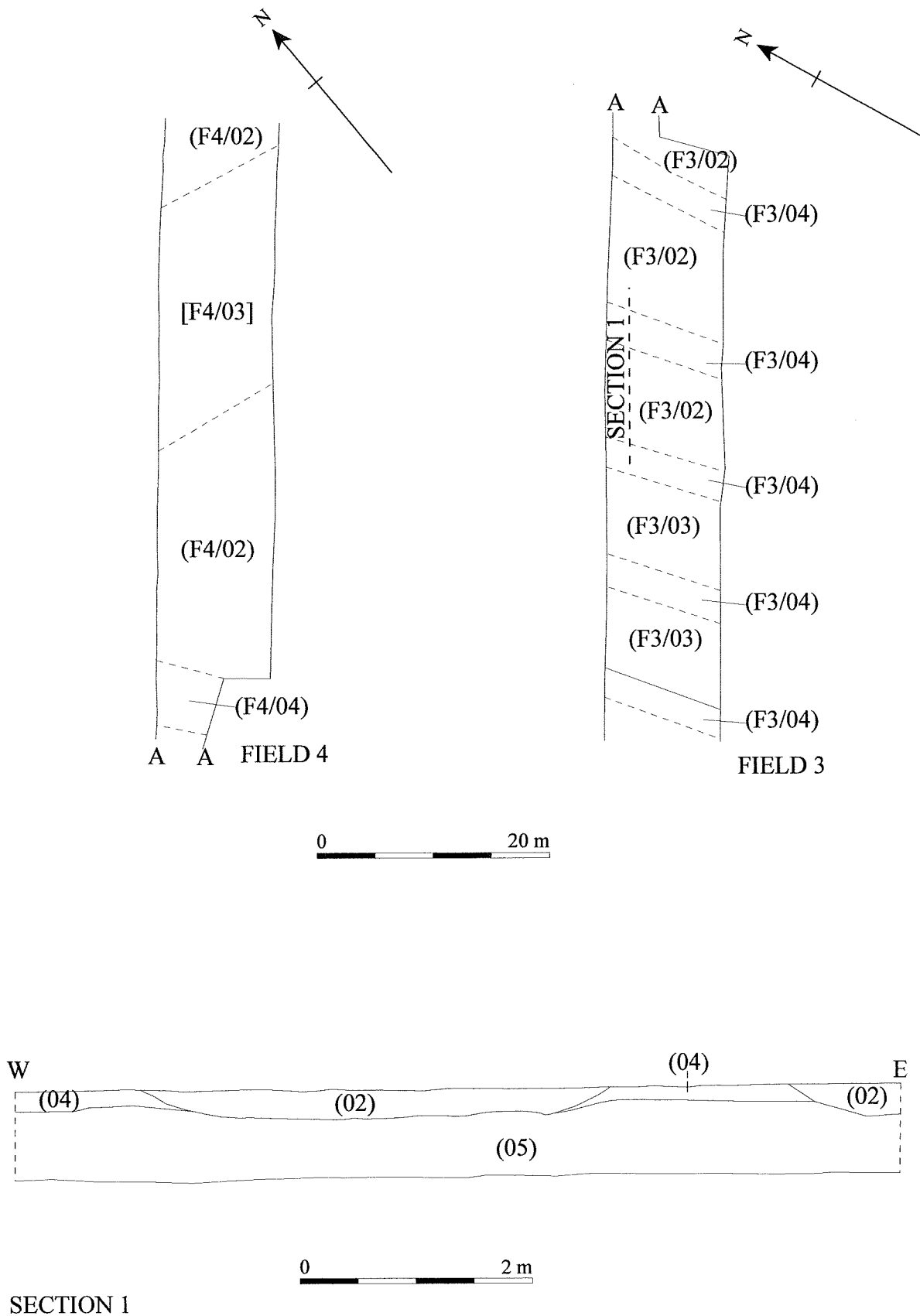


Figure 3. Plans and section

## The Road

Excavation of the pipe trench through the road revealed Greensand c. 0.50m below the modern road. The Greensand was overlain by a concrete raft c. 0.35m thick, which was sealed by tarmacadam c. 0.15m thick. No archaeological remains were observed as heavy truncation of any earlier road surfaces occurred prior to the construction of the road.

At the north end of the pipeline excavation through the road where the rising main leaves the pumping station an area 13m (east/west) by 8m (north/south) was machined stripped. No archaeological remains were observed as the area had been reduced at the time of the construction of the pumping station.

## 5 FINDS (By Paul Blinkhorn)

The pottery assemblage comprised 14 sherds with a total weight of 174g. It comprised a range of medieval and later wares, with the range of fabrics present suggesting there was an hiatus in medieval activity at the site stopped between the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as Potterspury ware (Milton Keynes fabric MC6), a very common find at medieval sites in the region during that time, is completely absent.

The assemblage was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

**MS3:** *Medieval Grey Sandy Wares*. Mid 11<sup>th</sup> – late 14<sup>th</sup> century. 1 sherd, 9g.

**MC3:** *Medieval Shelly ware* AD1100-1400. 2 sherds, 15g.

**MC9:** *Brill/Boarstall Ware* c. AD1200-?1600. 1 sherd, 24g.

**TLMS12:** *Red Earthenware* 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century. 8 sherds, 100g.

**PM25:** *White Earthenware*. Late 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century. 2 sherds, 9g.

The following, not present in the MK type-series, was also noted:

**LMOx:** Late Medieval Oxidized ware, 15<sup>th</sup> C. Hard, sandy orange ware, glazed and unglazed, in a variety of late medieval vessel forms. Similar wares were produced at a kiln at Jack Ironcap's Lane, Great Brickhill, Bucks (Beamish 1989). 1 sherd, 14g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type*

Context	MC3		MS3		MC9		LMOx		TLMS12		PM25		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
U/S			1	9	1	24	1	14					U/S
U/S (Compound)									8	100	2	9	U/S
F2 (02)	1	18											12thC
Total	1	18	1	9	1	24	1	14	8	100	2	9	

A few sherds of the following ceramic types were recorded in the topsoil of all fields but not retained:

**PM8:** *Red Earthenware*. 17<sup>th</sup> century.

**PM25:** *White Earthenware*. Late 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 6 DISCUSSION

Although the watching brief was intended to establish that the route of the supposed prehistoric route, the Icknield Way, ran to the south of the medieval hamlet of Terrick, only circumstantial evidence for this was recovered.

The area of disturbance [F4/05] measuring c. 18m wide may well be the line of the route. No evidence was recovered for metalling of the road. The earliest map of the site cannot be used to confirm or to deny the identification of this feature with the Icknield Way. Lily's Map of Ellesborough shows the line of the Icknield Way (Acknell Streete) from Little Kimble to Nash Lee appearing to follow a similar line to that which it takes today. It is nonetheless possible that the ancient road did follow a more southerly route (approximately 100m) than it does today approaching the crossroads at Terrick.

Harrison (2003) and Cooper (1998) strenuously attack the tradition of a prehistoric route, labelling the road a '12<sup>th</sup> century myth' (Cooper, 1998: 237) into which archaeologists have been "drawn to try and prove the unprovable". The watching brief at Nash Lee Rising Main could not disprove the existence of the route, as there appeared to be a broad feature located in approximately the supposed location of the road, but the limited view of it – not quite 12m east/west – does not permit an unqualified identification. Indeed the absence of any metalling militates against it being an important Roman road – unlike the other roads with which Henry of Huntingdon associated it in his *Historia Anglorum*. As seen it appeared to be a rural lane or droveway rather than a significant axis for traffic.

A single sherd of pottery (Medieval Shelly Ware) dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, or later, was recovered from the subsoil in Field 2 (F2/02). Mrs Hall, who carried out much field-survey of the parish in the 1980s, found 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century pottery (5747) on the north side of the A4010. Some of the other unstratified pottery (Brill/Boarstall Ware and Medieval Grey Sandy Wares) recovered would not be out of context as background noise. None of the pottery is suggestive of occupation or immediate settlement activity, but occurred in the subsoil or topsoil.

The remnant ridge and furrow observed in Fields 3 and 4 were of interest as no ridge and furrow was recorded on the SMR for this area. Although it is suggested on Lily's 1629 map of the parish that this part of the parish was still in strips and it is known to have been unenclosed until 1805, the degree of preservation was sufficient to illustrate that the post-medieval ridge and furrow was present. It is clear from other work undertaken in the county that this form of cultivation was a dynamic process (Gilbert & Moore, 2006) with the direction of the strips being changed, as well as modification of the length of strips.

Below the modern road all archaeological traces have been removed. As a consequence no interpretation can be drawn from the excavation of the pipe trench as to the nature of the putative Lower Icknield Way along the stretch of the road between the crossroads at Terrick and Nash Lee Farm. Extensive road building in the post-war period has obliterated all trace of any putative earlier route.

## 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

#### Physical record

The finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store.

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