

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

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10 November 1998

Re: Lockmeadow Footbridge, Maidstone : Archaeological Watching Brief

I am writing to report by letter as agreed, that the Oxford Archaeological Unit have carried out the archaeological watching brief on the Lockmeadow Footbridge construction project at NGR TQ 759 555 as required by the conditions of planning consent MA/97/1555. The relevant site works were carried out by Christiani Nielsen, between 2 September and 1 October 1998.

The footbridge crosses the River Medway from the new Lockmeadow development on the west bank to the Archbishops Palace complex and in particular the collegiate on the east bank. The collegiate is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Kent SAM 24348) and the bridge works crossed a few metres over its western boundary. It is the proximity of this and other SAM's in the vicinity, together with the possibility that this could be a crossing place for the River Medway of some antiquity which formed the basis for requesting the watching brief.

The intrusive works consisted of the excavation of 3 pits for the insertion of pile caps and 2 areas of general reduction of the land surface. The locations of these are detailed on the enclosed plan. The excavations were monitored and a written and photographic record made.

On the east bank Pit 1 measured 9 x 2.80 m and was excavated to a depth of 6.20 m OD, circa 0.80 m below the present ground surface. The tarmac footpath, which had a hardcore foundation, and the adjacent topsoil overlaid sandy clay deposits with brick inclusions which were heavily disturbed by tree root action. At the northern end of the pit these overlaid a substantial dump of building material of fairly modern origin. Immediately to the east of Pit 1 and crossing the boundary into the collegiate SAM, an area of scrub and topsoil was removed to create a temporary footpath. This clearance was very superficial and only 0.10-0.20 m of topsoil was removed, the underlying deposits were not revealed.

On the west bank, Pit 2 measured 6 x 4.70 m and was excavated to a depth of 5.80 m OD, circa 0.90 m below present ground surface. The tarmac of the car park with a hardcore foundation overlaid a sterile greenish grey clay deposit probably of natural origin. Pit 3 was adjacent to the river, measured 10.50 x 5.50 m maximum dimensions and was excavated to a depth of 3.88 m OD, circa 1.10 m below present ground surface. In this pit topsoil overlaid a substantial deposit of brown silty clay and a light greenish brown clay, interpreted as natural, was seen in the base. In the east facing section part of a metallised surface was seen at 4.30 m OD. It was overlain by silty deposits and had a hardcore and gravel foundation. This foundation was not considered to be of great antiquity and pieces of wire and other metal inclusions in the surface confirm this. Surrounding Pit 3 an area of ground was reduced by a maximum of 0.50 m to a general level of 5.00 m OD. Only brown silty clay as seen in Pit 3 was uncovered.

Having observed the excavation works on both the east and west banks we can confirm that no significant archaeological features or finds were revealed.

I have forwarded copies of this information to Mr A Tomlin at Maidstone Borough Council and Mr D Eve the SMR officer for Kent County Council.

I trust that this letter will satisfy your requirements. If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

David Score
Supervisor

encl: Location plan of monitored works

cc: A Tomlin, Maidstone Borough Council
D Eve, Kent County Council

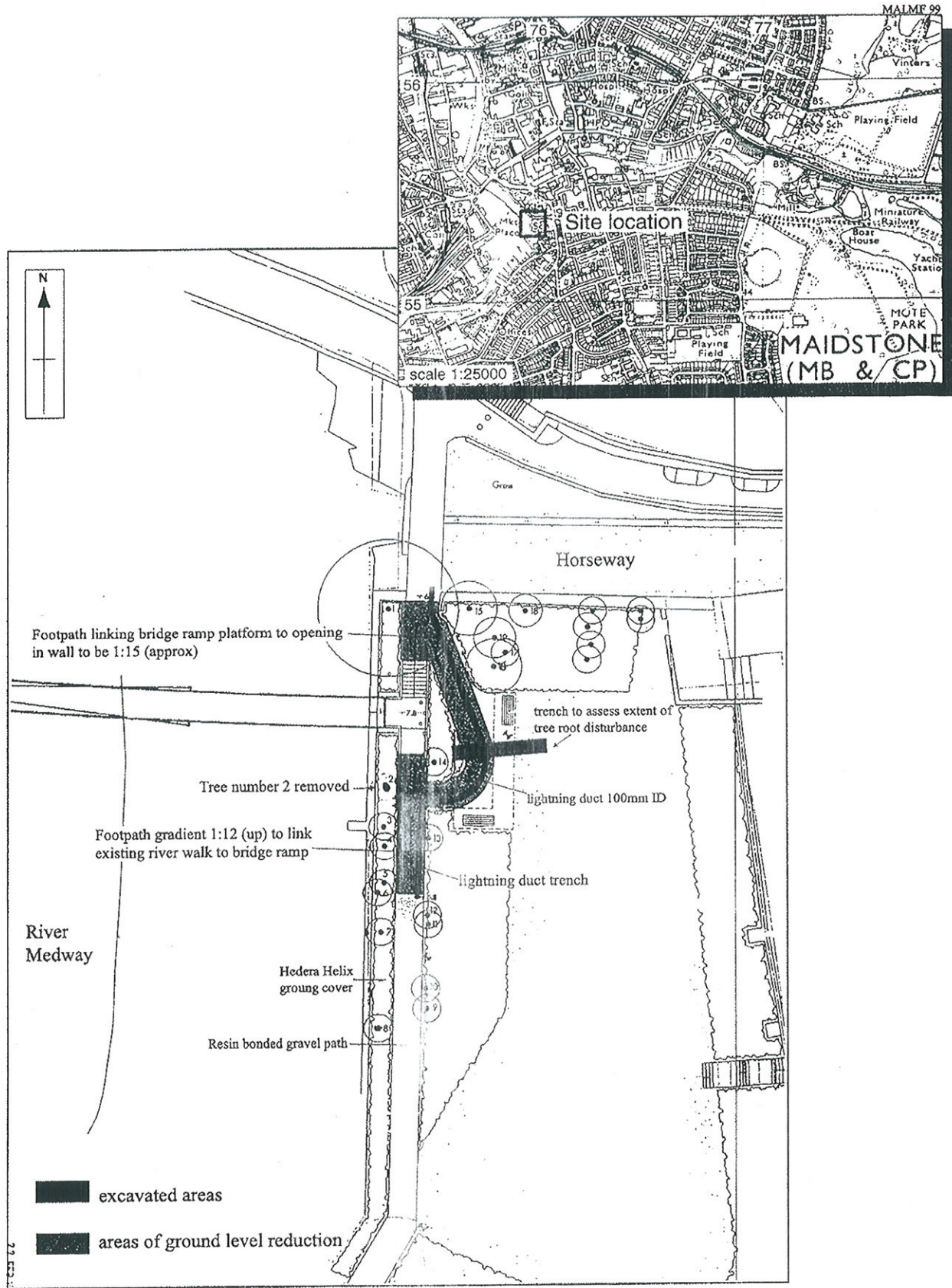


figure 1: site location plan