

## **1 SUMMARY**

*In June and July 2004, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group at Warnham Court Farm, Warnham, West Sussex. The watching brief involved monitoring the machine stripping of the topsoil and subsoil across the site with hand excavation and recording of archaeological features. Much of the site was heavily truncated by underground tanks and other buildings associated with the gasworks. The earliest phase of activity on the site dated to the Post-medieval period. This was most densely represented in the northern corner of the site (approximately 200m to the west of St. Margaret's church) where a scatter of largely sub-circular, shallow pits was found.*

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

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

The site of Warnham Court Farm is situated in Warnham, West Sussex at National Grid Reference TQ 1581 3353. The site covers an area of 1.7 hectares and is irregular in shape. It was previously occupied by a number of 20<sup>th</sup> century redundant farm buildings and one possible late 19<sup>th</sup> century byre, much altered. A concrete hardstanding area was present around the buildings, with open grassed areas to the north and east and young trees along the eastern boundary and a pond in the centre of the site. The site was also a former gas works and as a result contains a number of underground tanks.

### **2.2 Planning Background**

A draft planning condition (condition 14) for archaeological work has been included within a draft Section 106 agreement in relation to the planning application (WN/84/02) for residential development with the addition of new access roads at Warnham Court Farm, Warnham, West Sussex. The proposed scheme comprised the construction of a new residential development with access roads, gardens and parking space, along with areas of public space. Following advice from John Mills, Archaeological Officer for West Sussex County Council, a requirement for an archaeological watching brief was identified during the pre-construction groundworks.

### **2.3 Archaeological Background**

#### *General*

No previous archaeological work has been carried out on this site and few archaeological features or chance finds have been discovered in the surrounding area. The site contains no listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments.

There is cartographic evidence dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to present day in the form of Ordnance Survey maps. Prior to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century it is necessary to rely on

historical sources such as ancient charters and surveys which together provide a representative picture of earlier human activity in the vicinity.

The information provided here is a basic summary of the findings from the desk-based assessment. For a more detailed background refer to *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for Warnham Court Farm, West Sussex* (AOC September 2003).

#### *Prehistoric (before c. AD 43)*

The underlying geology of the site was unlikely to present favourable conditions to prehistoric peoples, being thick clay that does not drain well. The site is likely to have been covered by dense forest or woodland which also makes the possibility of prehistoric settlement unlikely. However, evidence of prehistoric activity in the area has been recorded approximately 1km to the west in the form of a scatter of Mesolithic and Neolithic flints.

#### *Roman (c. AD 43 - 450)*

There is no evidence of Roman activity in the Warnham area apart from a road, later known as Stane Street, which ran approximately 3.5km to the west of the site.

#### *Saxon (c. 450 - 1066)*

There is no evidence of Saxon activity in the Warnham area. However, it has been suggested that the name Warnham originated in the Saxon period, meaning ‘the grazing place of the stallions’.

#### *Medieval (c. 1066 - 1485)*

There is no mention of Warnham in the Domesday book of 1086 despite the possible Saxon origins of its name. The first reference to a manor established in the medieval period occurs in 1272. It is thought that this manor (the manor of Denn) was held by the lords of Bramber.

The earliest reference to Warnham is in a document giving Warnham to the Benedictine nunnery of St Mary Magdalene at Rusper. This suggests that there is likely to have been a church in Warnham prior to the present St. Margaret’s church (also referred to as St Mary’s church in the past). This earlier church was possibly located on, or close to, the site of the present church (built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century). Later additions were made to St Margaret’s church in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

A document of 1296 states that *Werneham* was located within the Hundred of Steyning. Little is known of the medieval settlement but it is likely to have been situated ribbon-like along the main arterial roads.

### *Post-medieval (c. 1485 - modern)*

Warnham experienced some expansion during the post-medieval period. However, much of the surrounding area remained as farming land predominantly for pastoral use due to the poor quality of the soil.

The earliest cartographic evidence dates to a map produced by J. Ford in 1778. The map shows the site was occupied by several large fields. There is no evidence of any buildings on the site. Various other maps are available but are of little use due to the scale. A Tithe map dating to 1840 reveals that the site was occupied by several houses with associated gardens although the majority of the land was associated with Warnham Court. Warnham Court house and gardens was laid out in 1828. In the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century the gardens were extended and a wild garden was added in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. After World War II Warnham Court was divided up and sold to the London County Council. Warnham Court gardens are Grade II listed on the register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest for West Sussex.

Ordnance survey maps of 1876 show that the Warnham Gas Works had been constructed on the site. These were built to service Warnham Court (to the south of the site) although they later provided gas supplies to St Margaret's Church. A row of terraced houses were also built in the northern part of the site. The majority of the site remained occupied by fields and orchards. A few additional buildings were added to the Gas Works around 1897 and 1975 but much of the area was still undeveloped.

The few SMR entries that do exist for the area within 1km of the site date from the post-medieval period. The first notes that a parkscape is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1898 at Ends Place (SMR 2746 WS56). The latest relates to a type one ice house in poor condition approximately 300m to the south of the site. It is probably contemporary with Warnham Court.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Aims of the Investigation**

The aims of the investigation, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC Archaeology 2004) were as follows:

- To determine the presence of any archaeological remains, particularly features associated with the medieval settlement and post-medieval development of Warnham.
- To record and sample excavate any such archaeologically important material.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

## 3.2 Methodology

West Sussex County Council (WSSC) was kept informed of the progress of the fieldwork and invited to monitor the works through site visits as appropriate. Any significant findings discovered during the course of the excavation were reported as soon as possible to WSSC via telephone or email, in the event that any special actions might be required. If significant remains were exposed a revised scheme would be devised in consultation with West Sussex County Council's Archaeologist (Mr J Mills), and submitted to Arun District Council for consideration by Mr S Cantwell of Planning Services.

Prior to commencing works on site, a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by AOC Archaeology (AOC 2004). A site code was assigned by Horsham museum prior to the commencement of the watching brief (2004.246.1).

All machine stripping was carried out with a 360° excavator using a toothless blade under constant supervision by an experienced archaeologist. The stripping was conducted in several phases. This was dictated by variable factors. Most disrupting was the need to stockpile spoil and demolition material produced as a result of the work being carried out by the demolition company (Comley and Sons) that was ongoing during the watching brief. There were also pauses to allow for the Japanese Knotweed to be dealt with by specialists. Each new phase of excavation was given a new area number primarily for quick and easy reference.

Where archaeological remains were exposed they were excavated by hand. A full written record was maintained for all deposits and features encountered during the excavation. Linear features were excavated in slots; where possible one at each end with an extra one or two 1m wide slots in the middle, while 50% of discreet features i.e. pit fills, were investigated. Sections of all excavated features were drawn, and features were planned (Fig. 3) and located using the hoarding (which followed the boundaries of the site as set out on the superplan, obtained from Maltby Land Surveys Ltd) for set points. Features were levelled using a dumpy level. The benchmark was transferred onto site from the side of the church. Black and white and colour photographic record shots were occasionally taken during the course of the work.

John Mills, Archaeological Officer for WSSC, was kept informed of the progress of the fieldwork. All work was carried out in accordance with the site procedures specified in the WSI (AOC 2004), the *Recommended Standard Conditions* of WSSC (2000), English Heritage AGP 3: *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork* and to the standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994). Provision was made for a post-excavation assessment and proposals for analysis as detailed in Appendix 4 in *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991).

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Natural deposits

Natural geological deposits across the site were a mixture of light blue-brown to light brown clay with bands of mid brown silty clay deposits. These deposits were recorded in slot cuts [007] and [015] and given individual numbers in the first phase of excavation because they were initially thought to be fills of a ditch due to the very straight, even nature of the deposits. However, the complete lack of finds, clean nature of the deposits and the fact that they all shelved off to the south-west indicated they were natural deposits. A general “natural” number was assigned to the natural deposits when recording the features in Area 4. Throughout there was a moderate amount of degraded sandstone within the clay matrix. All archaeological features were cut into the top of the natural levels below the subsoil. Several shallow pits were found in the northern corner (Areas 4 and 5) of the site. Most of these had a small quantity of post-medieval pottery sherds or building material in the fills.

### 4.2 Post-medieval features

#### 4.2.1 *Burnt features and deposits*

There were six burnt spreads across Areas 4 and 5. In some cases these were given cut numbers [029], [031], [059] and [077] as it did appear that they were deliberately cut into the ground, presumably as a means of containing them. Feature [029] in particular was regular in its shape in plan (forming a ring). This was excavated in two slots, which revealed the depth, slope and base of this feature to be irregular. It seems probable, therefore, that the red fill (028) is in fact burnt natural clay where the fire was at its hottest. Deposits (021) and (035) were not given cut numbers as they were very clearly sitting on top of the natural clay (016). No dating evidence was retrieved from any of these burnt areas except deposit (076), which contained a small number of post-medieval pottery sherds. These areas of burning are probably either the remnants of bonfires (which would be in keeping with the land use being for farming), or burnt tree bowls. The Ordnance Survey maps of 1876, 1897 and 1912 all show this part of the site to have some tree coverage.

#### 4.2.2 *Sub-curricular features*

The pits found in Areas 4 and 5 were largely shallow and sub-circular. Within this group can be listed: [020], [023], [025], [027], [033], [039], [045], [047], [049], [051], [065], [067], [069], [071] and [077]. These were mostly between 0.50m – 1.00m in diameter with a depth of no more than 0.20m. It was not clear what the function of these pits were, although most of them contained a small number of pot sherds, bone or building material. It is possible that these features represent the remains of garden features identified in the desk-based assessment (AOC 2003), which refers to “a row of terraced houses (that) have been constructed in the northern part of the site” in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It seems likely that these pits were flowerbeds within the gardens of the houses, although it should be

noted that they did not follow any coherent pattern in terms of their layout. Pit [018] had much better defined edges and was deeper than the generally shallow and sub-circular pits. It also contained occasional post-medieval pottery, glass and building material in its fill (017). Despite the greater depth it seems unlikely that its function could stray much from that of the pits in the surrounding locality.

#### 4.2.3 Linear features

Pit [043] was substantially larger than the pits listed above (approximately 1.80m in diameter, 0.50m in depth) and was cut by a short linear feature [041]. Both of these contained fragments of post-medieval pottery. Three slots were excavated through [041] – one at each terminus and one through the middle where it cut pit [043]. Investigation revealed that feature [041] was 6.00m in length with a width of 0.85m depth of 0.28m. The function of these features was not clear, although it would seem unlikely that they were contemporary given the difference in the fills; (040) being a firm grey/brown silty clay and (042) a firm light brown/orange clayey silt.

Three other linear features were recorded in Area 5:

- Linear [053] was orientated northwest - southeast adjacent to the western side of Area 5, with a visible length of 21.5m to the limit of excavation at its northwest end. At its widest the feature measured 0.90m in width (Slot 2), gradually tapering to 0.40m (Slot 3) at its southeast end, with a maximum depth of 0.22m.
- Feature [063] was curvilinear in plan, located at the northern extent of Area 5. With a northeast – southwest orientation, the feature curved towards the southeast and was approximately 19.50m long and 0.80m wide. At both ends the termini (shown in Slots 2 and 4) were quite abrupt.
- Orientated northeast – southwest, [073] measured 9.50m in length with a width of 0.70m. The feature was excavated in three slots with one at each terminus and a 1m slot in the centre, revealing a very shallow depth of 0.10m.

All of these linear features contained moderate inclusions of pottery, along with a variety of glass, metal or building material within their fills. These finds were readily identifiable as post-medieval. As with the shallow pits, these linear features do not seem to have any coherency to them. They did not possess regular alignments, had no uniform dimensions and were irregular in plan and section. Clearly these features were not structural. It seems likely that these too were garden features.

Two features within Area 4, [037] and [039], possessed a stratigraphic relationship that was not clear as their fills (036) and (038) were very similar. Pit [037] was aligned approximately northwest – southeast, with a depth of 0.08m and an undulating base with very gradual sides and break of slope both to the base and top. The fill (036) was a firm, light brown/grey silty clay very similar to the subsoil (002) across the whole site. It seems

likely that this was a dip in the natural clay (016) filled with (002). Possibly this was the result of rooting action.

#### 4.2.4 *Brick effort*

On the eastern edge of Area 4 a square, brick structure (034) was revealed below the subsoil. The structure was three courses deep into the natural clay (016) although no cut was visible. A small square hole in the centre contained a protruding metal bar that had been bent sideways as a result of the machining action. The bricks associated with the structure were frogged and date to the 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century. The function of this structure is not clear, although it is suggested that it maybe related to St Margaret's church (approximately 200m to the north), albeit as a very late addition.

#### 4.2.5 *Other features*

A feature [055] approximately 0.80m in diameter was recorded at the north end of Area 5. This was very shallow (0.06m deep) and the fill (054) contained a large quantity of late post-medieval pottery and glass. It is likely that [055] was a spread of rubbish rather than a deliberate cut given the depth and irregularity of the feature.

Two sub-square pits were found in Area 5. The first, [075], measured 1.00m x 0.80m, while [061] measured 1.30m x 0.80m. Both were filled with compact yellow/grey clay and animal bone. Pit [061] in particular contained the remnants of a horse. This was not fully excavated as there was a small amount of soft tissue around the head area. Both pits were approximately 0.40m deep.

One further sub-rectangular pit was recorded to the northwest end of Area 5. Although quite narrow (0.40m wide) [057] was 0.38m deep and contained a high concentration of bone within its fill (approximately 40%). Many of these had very obvious marks where they had been sawn off. It seems likely that this pit was dug for the purpose of depositing off-cuts, possibly from a residence or a butcher's.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The site at Warnham Court Farm in Warnham, West Sussex revealed evidence of human activity from the mid – late post-medieval period in the form of pits, linear features and areas of burning activity in the northern extent of the assessment site (Areas 4 and 5). While it is not clear what exactly the function of these features was, it is probable that they can be best explained by the land usage as being predominantly pastoral and domestic gardens.

The area of highest potential for medieval remains, between the main road and the bulk of the site, contained no archaeological deposits.

No archaeological features were recorded on any other part of the site. No earlier archaeological features were recorded in Areas 4 and 5.

## 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

AOC Archaeology (2003). *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for Warnham Court Farm, Warnham, West Sussex*

WSSC (2000). *Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording, and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control)*. Version 2b. West Sussex County Council. January 2000. Unpublished

**Figure 1**

**Fig 2**

**Fig 3**

**fig 4**

**APPENDIX A                      CONTEXT REGISTER**

<b>Strip and Record Area</b>				
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context Description</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Depth</b>
001	Loose brown silty clay. Topsoil.	Site	Site	0.14m
002	Firm light brown silty/sandy clay. Subsoil.	Site	Site	0.34m
003	Firm light grey/brown clay. Natural deposit.	Site	Site	0.60m+
004	Firm light grey/brown clay. Natural deposit	Site	Site	0.05m+
005	Firm light brown silty clay. Natural deposit.	Site	Site	0.30m+
006	Firm mid-brown stoney clayey silt. Natural deposit.	Site	Site	0.40m+
007	Hand excavated sondage.	4.10m	0.50m	0.68m
008	Firm light brown silty clay. Natural deposit.	Site	Site	0.42m+
009	Loose mid-brown stoney silt. Natural deposit.	Site	Site	0.40m+
010	Loose mid-brown stoney silt. Natural deposit.	Site	Site	0.36m+
011	Firm mid-brown/dark yellow silty clay. Subsoil.	Site	Site	0.14m
012	Firm light yellow/brown silty clay. Natural deposit.	Site	Site	0.36m+
013	Firm light yellow clay. Natural deposit.	Site	Site	0.10m+
014	Firm light blue/brown clay. Natural deposit.	Site	Site	0.20m+
015	Hand excavated sondage.	2.20m	0.40m	0.20m
016	Natural deposits	Site	Site	0.68m+
017	Firm light brown/grey clayey silt. Fill of pit [018].	0.90m	0.84m	0.46m
018	Cut of sub-square pit.	0.90m	0.84m	0.46m
019	Firm mid brown/yellow clay silt fill of [020].	1.40m	1.22m	0.20m
020	Cut of sub-circular pit.	1.40m	1.22m	0.20m
021	Firm red/black silty clay deposit (burnt).	1.70m	1.54m	0.24m
022	Firm light brown/grey clayey silt fill of [023]	1.20m	1.08m	0.20m
023	Cut of sub-circular pit.	1.20m	1.08m	0.20m
024	Loose light grey silty clay fill of [025].	0.90m	0.81m	0.22m
025	Cut of sub-square pit.	0.90m	0.81m	0.22m
026	Loose light brown/grey clayey silt fill of [027]	0.50m	0.36m	0.08m
027	Cut of sub-circular pit.	0.50m	0.36m	0.08m
028	Firm grey/red silty clay fill of [029].	2.00m	1.90m	0.20m
029	Cut of sub-circular pit.	2.00m	1.90m	0.20m
030	Firm red silty clay fill of [031].	0.95m	0.60m	0.15m
031	Cut of sub-circular pit.	0.95m	0.60m	0.15m
032	Firm mid brown/grey clayey silt fill of [033]	1.10m	1.10m	0.20m
033	Cut of sub-circular pit.	1.10m	1.10m	0.20m
034	Square brick structure.	0.80m	0.80m	0.26m
035	Firm red silty clay deposit (burnt).	1.30m	1.25m	0.12m
036	Firm light brown/grey silty clay fill of [037]	2.00m	0.50m	0.08m

037	Cut of sub-rectangular pit.	2.00m	0.50m	0.08m
038	Firm light brown/grey silty clay fill of [039].	1.50m	1.25m	0.15m
039	Cut of sub-circular pit.	1.50m	1.25m	0.15m
040	Firm brown/grey silty clay fill of [041]	6.10m	0.90m	0.30m
041	Cut of sub-rectangular pit.	6.10m	0.90m	0.30m
042	Firm light brown/orange clayey silt fill of [043]	1.90m	1.50m	0.52m
043	Cut of sub-circular pit.	1.90m	1.50m	0.52m
044	Loose brown/grey clayey silt fill of [045]	0.98m	0.75m	0.20m
045	Cut of sub-circular pit.	0.98m	0.75m	0.20m
046	Loose brown/grey clayey silt fill of [047]	0.45m	0.40m	0.06m
047	Cut of sub-circular pit.	0.45m	0.40m	0.06m
048	Loose grey/brown clayey silt fill of [049]	0.70m	0.60m	0.10m
049	Cut of sub-circular pit.	0.70m	0.60m	0.10m
050	Loose dark brown silt fill of [051]	0.30m	0.28m	0.08m
051	Cut sub-circular pit.	0.30m	0.28m	0.08m
052	Firm light grey/brown clayey silt fill of [053]	21.50m	0.90m	0.22m
053	Cut of linear feature.	21.50m	0.90m	0.22m
054	Loose brown/orange sandy silt fill of [055]	1.00m	0.64m	0.05m
055	Cut of sub-oval pit.	1.00m	0.64m	0.05m
056	Firm grey silty clay fill of [057]	1.50m	0.40m	0.38m
057	Cut of sub-rectangular pit.	1.50m	0.40m	0.38m
058	Firm brown/red silty clay fill of [059]	1.50m	1.40m	0.10m
059	Cut of sub-circular pit.	1.50m	1.40m	0.10m
060	Firm yellow clay fill of [061].	1.50m	0.80m	0.50m
061	Cut of rectangular pit (horse burial).	1.50m	0.80m	0.50m
062	Firm brown/grey silty clay fill of [063]	19.00m	0.80m	0.14m
063	Linear cut.	19.00m	0.80m	0.14m
064	Loose grey clayey silt fill of [065]	1.10m	1.08m	0.18m
065	Cut of sub-circular pit.	1.10m	1.08m	0.18m
066	Loose light brown clayey silt fill of [067].	0.80m	0.76m	0.10m
067	Cut of sub-circular pit.	0.80m	0.76m	0.10m
068	Loose light grey silty clay fill of [069].	1.30m	0.62m	0.24m
069	Cut of sub-rectangular pit.	1.30m	0.62m	0.24m
070	Loose dark brown sandy silt fill of [071]	0.50m	0.46m	0.14m
071	Cut of sub-circular pit.	0.50m	0.46m	0.14m
072	Firm mid-light brown/grey silty clay fill of [073]	8.20m	0.70m	0.10m
073	Cut of linear feature.	8.20m	0.70m	0.10m
074	Firm light grey/yellow clay fill of [075]	1.00m	0.80m	0.38m
075	Cut of sub-rectangular pit.	1.00m	0.80m	0.38m
076	Firm grey/red silty clay fill of [077]	1.44m	1.40m	0.16m
077	Cut of sub-circular pit	1.44m	1.40m	0.16m
078	Firm light brown/dark yellow silty clay fill of [079]	2.50m	0.90m	0.78m
079	Cut of sub-rectangular pit.	2.50m	0.90m	0.78m