

The Paddocks, Urchfont: Archaeological Evaluation

CONTENTS

Summary

Glossary of Archaeological Terms and Abbreviations

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND
- 3 AIMS
- 4 METHODOLOGY
- 5 RESULTS
- 6 DISCUSSION
- 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY
- 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FIGURE LIST

- Figure 1: Site Location
- Figure 2: Trench Location
- Figure 3: Trench 1, Plan and Section

SUMMARY

In August 2002 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at 17A The Paddocks, Urchfont, Wiltshire at NGR: SU 0397 5708. The project was commissioned by Julian Taylor Chartered Architects.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of one trench measuring 14m by 1.5m, across the proposed development area. (Figure 2)

Excavation of this trench revealed one Medieval pit and a high degree of root disturbance.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum)

OS

Ordnance Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in August 2002 on land at 17A The Paddocks, Urchfont, Wiltshire at NGR: SU 0397 5708. The project was commissioned by Julian Taylor Chartered Architects.
- 1.2 There has been a proposal to undertake a new residential development on the land at 17A The Paddocks, Urchfont. A programme of archaeological works was required prior to the determination of planning permission, in accordance with the principals of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16): Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990) and the archaeological policies of Wiltshire County Council.
- 1.3 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works. The project was undertaken in accordance with the Project Design prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2002), based upon the Brief provided by Sue Farr of the Wiltshire County Council Archaeological Service. The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (1994, revised 2001) and *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 It has been proposed that a new residential development will be undertaken on the land at 17A The Paddocks, Urchfont. The application site lies close to the Medieval parish church of Urchfont and it is likely, therefore, that the site fall within the Medieval core of the village.
- 2.2 The village of Urchfont is first recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as *Lerchesfonte*. This early record for the settlement would suggest that the village could have late Saxon or possibly earlier origins.
- 2.3 Find spots in the vicinity of the study area include Neolithic waste flakes from within Drove Lane Cemetery; situated to the south of the site, a Bronze Age tanged and barbed arrowhead, found north of the site and a Romano-British coin, found west of the site. Also to the northeast of the site there is an extant farmstead with Medieval origins.
- 2.4 The site therefore contains the potential for archaeological deposits of Saxon and Medieval date. This will not prejudice the evaluation against the recovery of finds or features dating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits, in order to provide

The Paddocks, Urchfont: Archaeological Evaluation

sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.

3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;

ii) To attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The project required the excavation of one evaluation trench measuring 15m by 1.5m. The trench location is shown on Figure 2.

4.2 Topsoil and non-significant overburden was removed to the top of the archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved with the use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter the trenches were cleaned and all additional excavation was conducted by hand.

4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the Foundations Archaeology Project Design (2002) and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

5.1 The Trench was located within an area of garden.

5.2 **Trench 1** (15m long) was aligned approximately east–west and was excavated onto natural sands at an average depth of 1.07m (120.2m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural sands contained large patches of iron-panning and was sealed beneath (103), a mid grey/green silt sand layer, up to 0.32m thick. This was in turn overlaid by a dark brown/black clay sand subsoil (102), up to 0.60m thick. The subsoil contained a few pieces of industrial waste and a large unabraded sherd of 16th to 17th century German stoneware. The subsoil was then sealed by a mid to dark grey/brown humic sand silt topsoil (101), up to 0.30m thick. The trench was situated near to a mature

The Paddocks, Urchfont: Archaeological Evaluation

apple tree and consequently was heavily root disturbed throughout. A single pit [104] was present within the trench.

- 5.3 Feature [104] was a shallow flat-based pit, sub-square in plan, with a diameter of 1.60m and depth of up to 0.25m. The feature was only partially exposed within the confines of the trench. The pit contained (105), a mottled mid grey/brown silty sand fill, with occasional small sandstone inclusions. The fill contained patches of redeposited natural sand and was root disturbed throughout. Four undiagnostic bodysherds of Medieval pottery were recovered from the fill. These consisted of a single sherd of flint tempered ware (Newbury B) probably originating from a source near Marlborough, two sherds of Bath A ware and a single sherd of limestone tempered (Minety-type) ware. All the pottery was consistent with a mid 12th-13th century date.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 A single medieval pit of mid 12th-13th century date was present archaeological in the evaluation trench.
- 6.2 The presence of the pit indicates that there was Medieval activity on the site, although this appears to be relatively limited.
- 6.3 The depth of the topsoil and subsoils within the site would provide very good survival conditions for any further archaeological features that may be present.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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