LAND TO THE REAR OF THE ROYAL OAK, SOUTH CERNEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

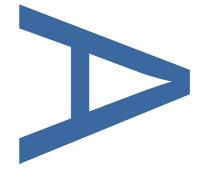
POST-EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

SITE CODE: ROSC17

PCA REPORT NO: 13238

**JANUARY 2018** 

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY







# LAND TO THE REAR OF THE ROYAL OAK, HIGH STREET, SOUTH CERNEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE: POST EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Local Planning Authority:	Cotswold District Council
Planning Reference:	16/02670/FUL
Site Code:	ROSC17
Central NGR:	404626 196844
Commissioning Client:	Cordage Asset Management Ltd
Written/Researched by:	Dominic McAtominey, PCA
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### January 2018

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#### DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

- Site Name: Land to the rear of the Royal Oak, High Street, South Cerney, Gloucestershire
- Project Type: Strip, map and sample investigation post-excavation assessment report

Report: R13238

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code			K5265
	Name & Title	Date	
Text Prepared by:	D McAtominey	26/01/2018	
Graphics Prepared by:	Diana Valk	19/01/2018	
Graphics Checked by:	J Brown	19/01/2018	
Project Manager Sign-off:	P McCulloch	14/11/2018	

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Detailed Site Location Showing Area Monitored

Figure 3: Sections and Plan of Ditch [1001]/[1003]/[1019]

Figure 4: Section and Plan of Pit [1008] and Cut [1016]

# 1 ABSTRACT

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Cordage Asset Management Ltd to undertake an archaeological investigation at land to the rear of the Royal Oak public house, South Cerney, Gloucestershire. The investigation was carried out in mitigation of a proposed housing development, and was secured by a condition of planning consent for the development. Previous ground works relating to the extension of the Royal Oak in the 1990s revealed buried human remains, believed to date to the early medieval (Saxon) period, prompting the requirement for the investigation.

The investigation was carried out between 05/12/2017 and 13/12/2017 and revealed no evidence of buried human remains or any other early medieval archaeology. An undated linear feature running east to west was revealed and may date from the Romano-British period. Finds from a large post medieval pit may suggest it was used for rubbish disposal from the Royal Oak public House.

# 2 INTRODUCTION

#### 2.1 Project Background

- 2.1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) was appointed by Cordage Asset Management Group to undertake an archaeological investigation on land to the rear of the Royal Oak public house, high street, South Cerney, Gloucestershire (NGR 404626 196844), hereafter 'the Site'. The Site (Figure 1) was the subject of a development proposal comprising two detached houses and garages.
- 2.1.2 The investigation was required by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) Cotswold District Council and was secured by Condition 14 of planning permission (Planning Reference 16/02670/FUL). The requirement was based on advice provided to the LPA by Charles Parry, Gloucestershire County Archaeologist (CAO), prompted by previous discoveries of human burials at the rear of the Royal Oak in the 1990's..
- 2.1.3 The investigation informed by a rapid archaeological appraisal (PCA 2017a) and was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (2014b), in keeping with the requirement of Condition 14, and comprised a strip, map and sample investigation of the rear garden of the Royal Oak public House, an area of approximately 550m<sup>2</sup>. This report presents the result of the investigation and has been prepared in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological excavation issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and in accordance with guidance issued by Historic England (Historic England, 2015).

#### 2.2 Location, Topography and Geology

- 2.2.1 The Site lies to the rear of the Royal Oak public house on High Street South Cerney, some5.5km south of Cirencester, Gloucestershire (Figures 1 and 2).
- 2.2.2 The Site is bordered to the north by the Royal Oak, by private properties to the east and west and by Berkeley Street to the south, from which the Site is accessible. The southern boundary of the Site is formed of a low wall and wooden gate. The site comprises part of the Royal Oak's beer garden and comprises a grassed area with a flag stone path.
- 2.2.3 The Site is situated on level ground at approximately 90.90m above OD. The River Churn flows c. 315m to the north of the site.
- 2.2.4 The bedrock geology of the area comprises Cellarways Clay Member mudstone formed approximately 164 to 166 million years ago in the Jurassic Period when the local environment was previously dominated by shallow seas (British Geological Survey website). The superficial geology within the development boundary comprises Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member formed up to three million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by rivers (ibid.).
- 2.2.5 No geotechnical data specific to the current scheme was available prior to the production of this document, however, natural gravels were noted c. 0.84m below ground level in 1999 during an archaeological investigation at the rear of the Royal Oak (Oakeshott 2000).

#### 2.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the Site was set out in the appraisal prepared in respect of the Site's proposed development (PCA 2017 a). The appraisal found that there are records of 33 sites, find spots and monuments in the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record within 750m of the proposed development. The Site was considered to have high potential for early medieval remains.
- 2.3.2 Of significance, previous development at the rear Royal Oak led to the discovery of several inhumation burials of possibly late Saxon/early medieval date, which suggest the presence of a cemetery, the extent of which is uncertain. The appraisal (PCA 2017 a) recounted summary accounts of the previous discovery of burials, for which there exists no detailed report, as follows:

The archaeological remains uncovered from around South Cerney also attest to early medieval activity within the 750m search radius of the proposed development. A human Skeleton was found in 1997 during building works to the rear of The Royal Oak public house that borders the study site to the north (HER 20001). The bones were noted during the construction of a service trench running along the south side (rear) of the building during the installation of a manhole. Unfortunately, the remains were not in situ and there was no evidence for a grave cut into the gravel. The landlord, a Mr Greenhough, was not certain of the depth at which the skeleton was found or the orientation and attitude of the building human bones were also recovered when the spoil from the trench was hand sieved by volunteers.

A brief inspection of the remains revealed the presence of a fragmentary skull, an intact lower jaw with some teeth, arm and leg bones, ribs and vertebrae. The sizes of the bones suggested the individual was pre-adult, or possibly a small adult. The material was noted to be in very good condition and very little fragmentation had occurred. However, the absence of a complete skeleton was likely due to the method of recovery rather than ground conditions (Parry 1998).

In 1999 an extension was added to the Royal Oak public house (HER 20001). Prior to this phase of construction, the drain areas were carefully cleaned and examined, which exposed the remains of two leg bones (Oakeshott 2000). Unfortunately, the remains lay under a thick concrete path, a hedge and an outbuilding scheduled for demolition. When the building, hedge and path had been removed the two skeletons were exposed.

The first grave was observed c. 0.84m below ground level, with the grave cut 0.24m into the natural gravels. The grave contained the virtually complete remains of two legs, i.e. the lower femur, kneecap, tibia, fibula and feet. Unfortunately, however, the east-west orientated burial contained no grave goods.

The second skeleton, located 0.32m away from the first, was noted to have been truncated during the installation of the drain in 1997. It too lay at a depth of 0.84m below ground

level, on the same orientation and with an equal lack of grave goods. Oakeshott (2000) notes that the vertebrae were incomplete and that the ribs had been enclosed in dark earth and were wrongly ordered. They lay within a few centimetres of the newly built brick drain. An eight-metre trench parallel to the foundation revealed two more grave cuts at approximately 0.84m below ground level (now separated from the original graves by the new rear wall of the pub). Two burials were contained within one of the grave cuts with the later contained within a coffin as coffin staining and brackets were recovered close by. The second grave cut was located approximately 0.9m to the south and contained the remains of a young male as the epiphytes at the top and lower ends of the humerus were not fused and there were no wisdom teeth.

An additional 5m long trench was excavated at the site, however no additional remains were exposed resulting in Oakeshott (2000) concluding that the other burials were located under the 18th century pub (with the five burials uncovered during the 1997 and 1999 works being located within the extension to the pub or under the patio).

There was no trace of any pottery datable to before the 11th or 12th centuries and these sherds were separated from the graves by an apparently undisturbed layer of soil c. 0.24m thick. Furthermore, no datable material was recovered around the skeletons save the coffin furniture. Oakeshott (2000) notes that the brackets bear a remarkable resemblance to the side angle brackets reported by Caroline Heighway at St. Oswald's, Gloucester which she dated from other evidence to the early 10th century (although earlier dates have also been suggested).

It is plausible that the site may represent the vestigial remains of an early-medieval cemetery that could perhaps extend within the proposed development area.

# 3 AIM

#### 3.1 Archaeological Strip, Map, Sample

- 3.1.1 As set out in the WSI the general aims of the excavation were:
  - To investigate and record archaeological remains within the Site, taking account of the date, nature, extent bio-archaeological and palaeo-enviromental potential of the resources.
- 3.1.2 The aim of this report is to provide the results of the investigation, assess their significance and provide recommendations, as appropriate, for further analysis and publication in, keeping with the methods, archiving and reporting requirements set out in the WSI and the requirements for the proposed development.
- 3.1.3 The investigation had regard to broad research aims and Theme D set out in the South West Archaeological Research Framework (Grove & Croft 2014) and more specific aims related to previous investigations in the immediate vicinity of the Site:
  - Within the Site, what evidence is there for the extent of the cemetery discovered at the rear of the Royal Oak?
  - What is the date of the cemetery? Can this be elucidated by evidence from the Site in the form of datable finds associated with burials, in the form of stratigraphic indices or through scientific dating?
  - What burial traditions or practices are present within the cemetery or individual burials that might assist in understanding the cultural and religious attributes of the cemetery population?

# 4 RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following presents a summary of the results of the strip, map and sample investigation and is based upon the Site archive, which comprises written, drawn and digital photographic records alongside a small artefactual assemblage. A list of the contexts referred to is provided in **Appendix 1**. The archive is held at PCA's Winchester office under the site code **ROSC17** and in due course will be deposited with the Corinium Museum.

#### 4.2 Methodology

- 4.2.1 The archaeological investigation was undertaken following the methodology detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (PCAb 2017), which was approved on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Charles Parry, Gloucestershire CAO.
- 4.2.2 The investigation comprised the initial mechanical stripping of an area of approximately 550m<sup>2</sup> (Figure 2) in two roughly equal parts, one followed by the other (Plate 1). The extent of the investigation was established 1.5m within the Site boundary except within the access where sufficient area was retained for access, plant and welfare.
- 4.3 The area was mechanically excavated using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a wide toothless blade bucket. All mechanical excavation was supervised by a suitably qualified archaeologist familiar with the ground conditions anticipated on the Site. Up-cast was stored adjacent to each part of the Site. All subsequent investigation was carried out by hand.

#### 4.4 Summary of Deposition Sequence

4.4.1 The natural was found to be a mid reddish brown gravel and silty clay. The two archaeological features that were recorded were cut into the natural and lay beneath the remains of a car park and, where this was not present, topsoil. In the north of the Site the topsoil was a dark greyish brown clayey sand, 0.8m deep, and lay directly on top of the natural geology.

#### 4.5 Archaeological Features

4.5.1 A linear feature, group [1025], was recorded running east – west across the site. The western extent of the feature (Figure 2, 3 & Plate 2), recorded as [1019], measured 0.60m wide and 0.57m deep and had a single fill (1024) of light greyish brown silty clay and a high quantity of fragmented sandstone, from which six small fragments of animal bone were recovered.

- 4.5.2 The eastern extent of the linear feature group [1025] was found to comprise an original cut [1001] and a re-cut [1003] (Figure 2, 3 & Plate 3). The recut was 1.55m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.72m. Cut [1001] contained fill (1002), which was a mid greyish brown silty clay and gravel and which contained no finds. Cut [1003] contained a single fill (1004) of mid reddish brown silty clay and sandstone fragments; three small fragments of animal bone and three small sherds of coarse ware pottery were recovered from the fill, one a grey sandy ware sherd of possibly late 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date.
- 4.5.3 A short section of an undated linear feature [1016] was identified in the north east corner of the Site. The feature was on a north west south east alignment and measured 0.62m wide and 0.25m deep, with straight sides and a concave base (Figures 2, 4 & Plate 4).
  [1016] had a single dark greyish brown gravel and silty clay fill (1017) which contained three small fragments of animal bone.
- 4.5.4 A large post medieval pit [1008] was revealed in the north of the site (Figures 2, 4 & Plate
  5). [1008] was sub rectangular in shape, measured 2.8m+ in length, 3m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.88m with steep concave to vertical sides, an irregular base and contained eight fills ((1008) to (1013) and (1018)). Fills (1009) to (1012) were similar greyish brown silty clays and contained mixed assemblages of animal bone, CBM, clay pipe, post-medieval pottery and some Fe objects were found in (1012). Fill (1013) was a mid-greenish brown sandy clay material which contained post-medieval pottery and CBM.
- 4.5.5 Pit [1008] was truncated in the east side by a modern sub circular pit which when investigated was found to contain plastic, modern pottery and modern building material.

#### 4.6 Discussion

- 4.6.1 The archaeological investigation was carried out in accordance with the WSI and investigated the area of the proposed development. Regarding the specific aims of the investigation, no evidence for human burials was found and there was no indication that the Site had been altered in way that would have removed evidence of burials. On this basis it would appear that the burial ground or cemetery found immediately to the north in the 1990's did not extend into the Site.
- 4.6.2 The two linear ditches, one east-west and the other north-south may indicate land or property boundaries, but it is not possible to be certain of their date; three small sherds of Romano-British pottery form one of the ditch fields is suggestive of their date, which would be consistent with Romano-British remains in the wider landscape.
- 4.6.3 In conclusion, the potential of the archaeological remains recorded by the investigation is very limited and in consequence no further work of analysis is recommended. The information gained from the excavation should be added to the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record and a note on the investigation provided to the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.

#### 5 Archive Preparation and Deposition

#### 5.1 The Site Archive

5.1.1 The Site archive, to include all project records and cultural material produced by the project, will be prepared in accordance with 'Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage' (UKIC 1990) and the Institute for Archaeologists 'Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives' (ClfA 2014). On completion of the project PCA will arrange for the archive to be deposited with the Corinium Museum.

#### 5.2 Copyright

- 5.2.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. Cotswold District Council however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003. Further distribution and uses of the report either in its entirety or part thereof in paper or electronic form is prohibited without the prior consent of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.
- 5.2.2 The licence extends to the use of all documents arising from this project in all matters relating directly to the project, as well as for bona fide research purposes (which includes the Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology and Historic Building Record).
- 5.2.3 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the content of this report. However, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd cannot accept any liability in respect of, or resulting from, errors, inaccuracies or omissions this report contains.

# 6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pre-Construct Archaeology is grateful to Cordage Asset Management Ltd for commissioning the project. The evaluation was supervised by Dominic McAtominey, assisted by James Bannister. This report was prepared by Dominic McAtominey with illustrations prepared by Diana Volk. The project was managed for PCA by Paul McCulloch.

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- PCA, 2017 a, 'Land to the rear of the Royal Oak, South Cerney, Gloucestershire: Rapid Archaeological Appraisal', PCA Report 13052.
- PCA 2017 b, Land to the rear of the Royal Oak, High Street, South Cerney, Gloucestershire: WSI for an archaeological investigation – strip, map and sample.

# **APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX**

Context Number	Туре	Description	Interpretation	Finds
1000	Layer	Mid reddish brown gravel and silty clay	Natural Geology	
1001	Cut	Cut of Ditch	Initial cut of ditch, truncated by [1003]. Possible Boundary	
1002	Fill	Mid grey brown silty clay and gravel. Fill of [1001]	Original basal fill of ditch [1001], possible slumping deposit	
1003	Cut	Recut of Ditch	Recut - Widening of Ditch [1001]	
1004	Fill	Firm mid reddish brown silty clay. Fill of [1003]	Backfill of Ditch recut [1003]	Pot, Bone, Stone
1005	Layer	Firm dark grey brown silty clay	Layer of material between Ditch [1001] [1003] and car park. Modern Levelling?	
1006	Layer	Light brown yellow sand and rubble	Levelling layer for car park	
1007	Layer	Mid black grey tarmac and gravel	Modern car park tarmac	
1008	Cut	Cut of Large Pit	Cut of large post-medieval refuse pit	
1009	Fill	Light greyish brown silty clay. Fill of pit [1008]	Top fill of pit [1008], Post-med refuse material	Pot, CBM, Clay Pipe
1010	Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay. Fill of pit [1008]	Fill of pit [1008], post-med refuse material underlying (1009).	Pot, Bone, Clay Pipe
1011	Fill	Dark greyish brown silty clay. Fill of Pit [1008]	Fill of pit [1008], post-med refuse material underlying (1009) in North facing section.	Pot, CBM, Clay Pipe, Bone
1012	Fill	Light brownish grey clayey silt. Fill of pit [1008]	Bottom fill of pit [1008]. Post-med refuse material	Pot, CBM, Clay Pipe, Bone, Fe object
1013	Fill	Firm mid greenish brown clay. Fill of Pit [1008]	Fill of pit [1008], possible biological material on base and western edge of pit.	Pot, CBM
1014	Layer	Dark greyish brown clayey sand	Modern Topsoil	
1015	Layer	Dark brownish grey clayey sand	Modern Topsoil	
1016	Cut	Cut of shallow linear	Possible ditch, could be boundary	
1017	Fill	Dark greyish brown gravel and silty clay	Gravel fill of linear, backfill?	Bone
1018	Fill	Light brownish grey silty clay. Fill of Pit [1008]	Layer of refuse material in pit [1008], above (1012)	

Land to the rear of the Royal Oak, High Street, South Cerney, Gloucestershire: Post excavation assessment report © Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, January 2018

1019	Cut	Cut of Ditch	Cut of steep sided ditch. Likely continuation of [1001], without recut.	
1020	Layer	Mid greyish brown silty clay	Topsoil	
1021	Layer	Mid black grey tarmac and gravel	Modern car park tarmac	
1022	Layer	Mid greyish brown silty clay	Sub Soil above linear [1019]	
1023	Layer	Light greyish brown silty clay	Levelling layer above linear [1019]	
1024	Fill	Light greyish brown silty clay and stone. Fill of linear [1019]	Single fill of Linear [1019] which contained a high concentration of worked/faced stone	CBM, Stone
1025	Group	Linear Ditch	Group Number for Ditch [1001]/[1003] and [1019]	

# APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHS (PLATES 1 – 5)



Plate 1. General view, western side of the Site, view to north.



Plate 2. Section of Linear [1019]. View facing West

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Plate 3. Section of Linear [1001]/ [1003]. View Facing East



Plate 4. Section of Linear [1016]. View facing South

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Plate 5. Section of Pit [1008]. View facing East

# **APPENDIX 3: OASIS RECORD**

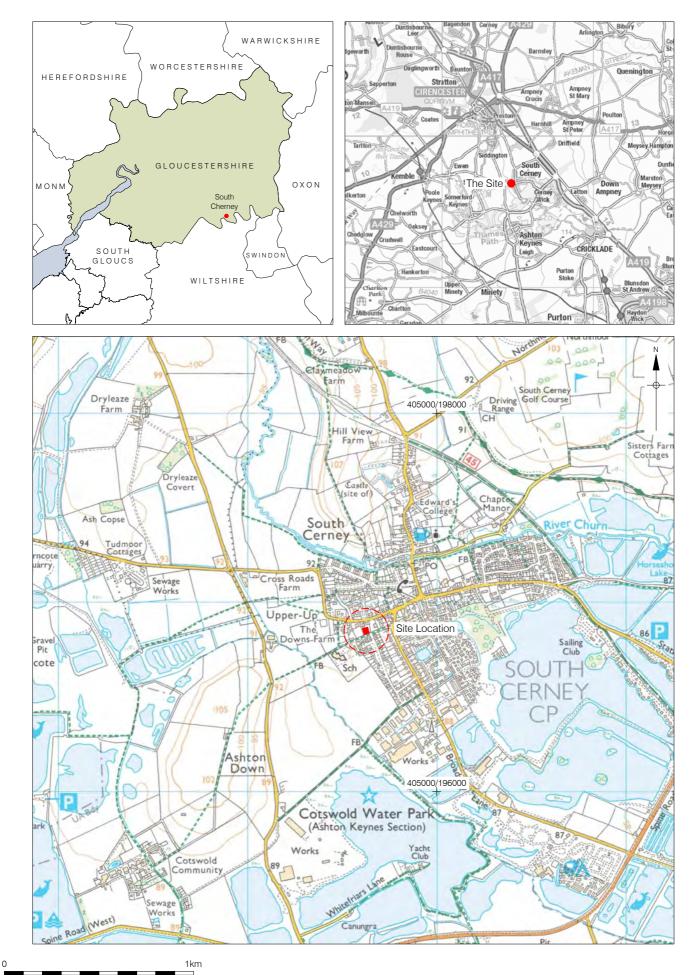
#### 8 OASIS ID: preconst1-305652

# Project details

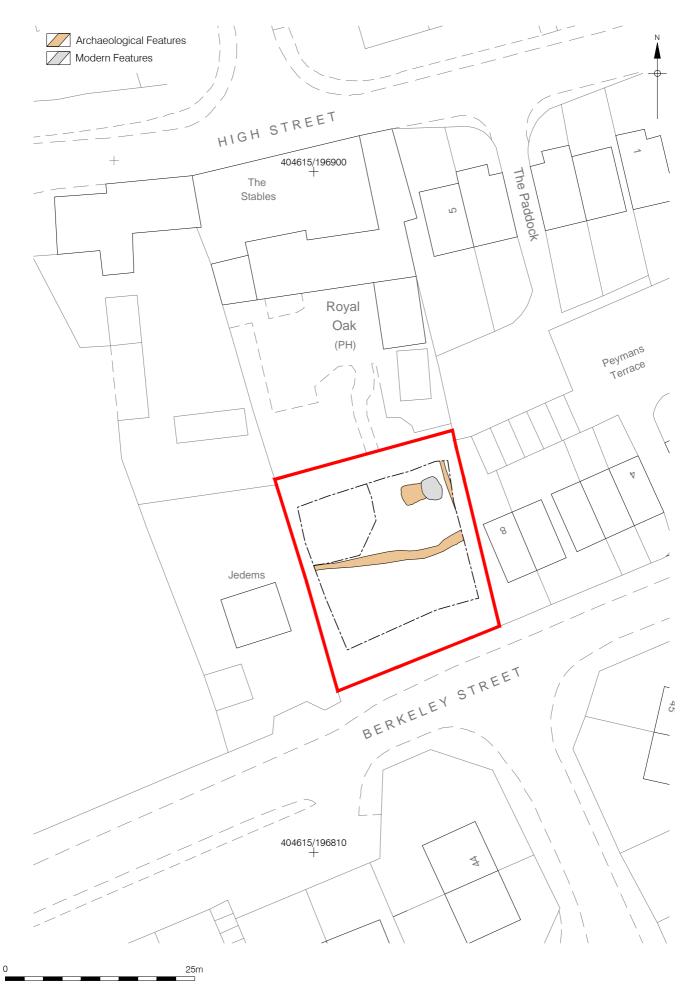
Project details	
Project name	Land to the rear of the Royal Oak South Cerney, Gloucestershire
Short description of the project	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Cordage Asset Management Ltd to undertake archaeological investigation at land to the rear of the Royal Oak public house, South Cerney, Gloucestershire. The investigation was carried out in mitigation of proposed housing development, secured by a condition of planning consent for the development. Previous ground works relating to the extension of the Royal Oak in the 1990s revealed buried human remains, believed to date to the early medieval (Saxon) period. The investigation was carried out between 05/12/2017 and 13/12/2017 revealed no further evidence of buried human remains or any other early medieval archaeology. Identified archaeological features were an undated linear, a potentially Roman linear ditch and a large post medieval pit which may have been related to the Royal Oak.
Project dates	Start: 05-12-2017 End: 13-12-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	ROSC17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Monument type	DITCH Roman
Investigation type	"Full excavation"
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GLOUCESTERSHIRE COTSWOLD SOUTH CERNEY Land to the rear of the Royal Oak, South Cerney, Gloucestershire
Postcode	GL7 5UP
Study area	550 Square metres
Site coordinates	SU 404626 196844 50.974604993562 -1.423617225583 50 58 28 N 001 25 25 W Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.

Organisation

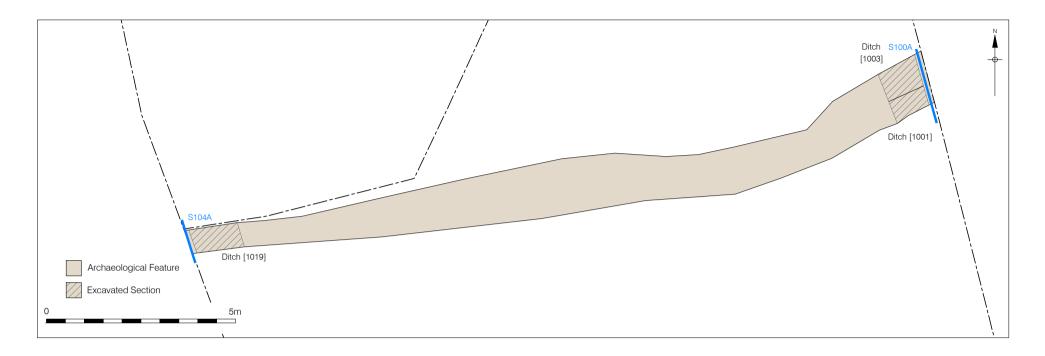
Project brief originator	Gloucestershire County Council
Project design originator	Paul McCulloch
Project Manager	Paul McCulloch
Project supervisor	Dominic McAtominey
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Corinium Museum
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Metal"
Digital Archive recipient	Corinium Museum
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Database","GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Matrices","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land to the Rear of the Royal Oak, High Street, South Cerney, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for An Archaeological Investigation - Strip, Map and Sample
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Winchester
Place of issue or publication	Winchester
Project bibliography 2	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land to the rear of the Royal Oak, South Cerney, Gloucestershire: Rapid Archaeological Appraisal'
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Date	2017
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Entered on	9 January 2018

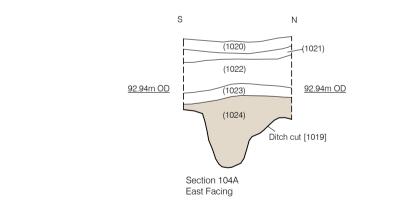


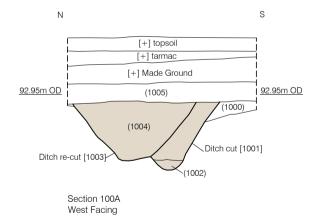
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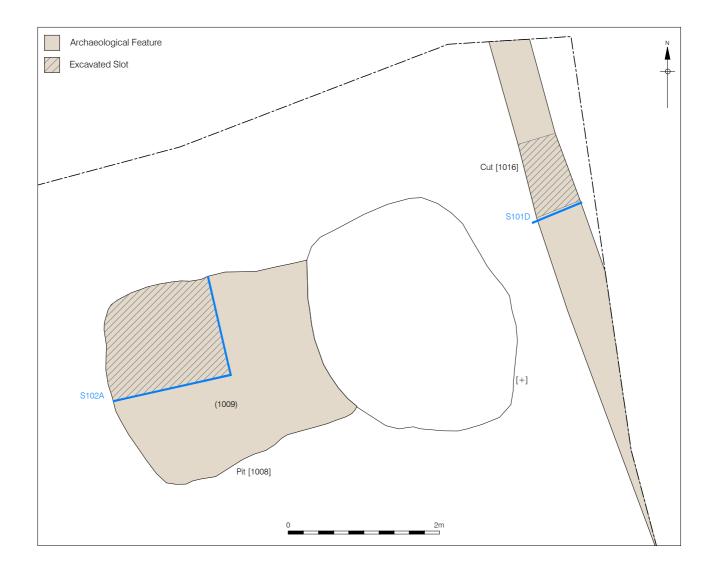




Archaeological Feature



© Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2018 19/01/18 DV Figure Sections and Plan of Ditch [1001]/[1003]/[1019 Plan 1:100 and Sections 1:40 at A



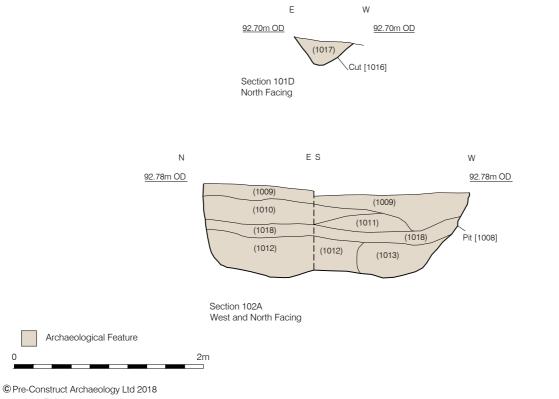


Figure 4 Section and Plan of Pit [1008] and Cut [1016] Plan 1:50, Section 1:40 at A4

19/01/18 DV

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