

Land off The Old Gated Road, Chesterton, Warwickshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



understanding heritage matters

Report No 1318
April 2013



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Land off the Old Gated Road

Commissioned by: Mr David Jackson

Project Report No. 1318

Site Code: CO12

NGR: SP 348 585

Planning Reference: 11/01445/FUL

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Date: April 2013

Report reference: Coutts, C. M. 2013 *Land off The Old Gated Road, Chesterton, Archaeological Watching Brief.* Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1318.

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Summary

Archaeological recording was carried out at land off the Old Gated Road, Chesterton, when ground reduction was taking place for a new concrete stable base. The depth of stripping was within the topsoil and no archaeological finds or features associated with the medieval settlement were recorded.

1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission and Scheduled Monument Consent have been granted for the erection of a prefabricated timber stable on a concrete base, on land of the Old Gated Road, Chesterton (Planning Ref. 11/01445/FUL; SMC ref. S00043665). Scheduled Monument Consent was given for limited ground reduction for the concrete base. The site lies in an area of archaeological importance, being part of a deserted medieval settlement with significant earthworks, and close to areas of Roman remains. Because of the potential for archaeological deposits to be disturbed or exposed by the work, it was a condition of planning permission that the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, and that this should be submitted and approved by the Planning Authority before work commences.

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of archaeological observation of soil stripping of the proposed stable base, in accordance with a brief prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority (August 2012), was commissioned from Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire and carried out in March 2013 and this report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code CO13.

2 Location

2.1 The development site is located in a field to the north of Green Farm, in the parish of Chesterton and Kingston at National Grid reference SP 348 585.

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Blue Anchor Formation (Tea Green Marl) of the Mercia Mudstone Group (British Geological Survey 1984).

3 Methodology

3.1 The watching brief was designed to observe any groundworks associated with the development and record, as far as possible, the nature of the archaeological resource on the site.

3.2 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications. Fieldwork involved an archaeologist being present during groundworks.

4 Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 The development site lies close to the remains of a Romano-British villa (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record no. MWA 782, Scheduled Ancient Monument no. 35104, Fig. 1), parts of which are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979 since 2001 due to its good preservation. In 1994 archaeological excavations uncovered a range of the villa which included a corridor with a three-coloured mosaic floor (Jones 1994). The mosaic has been tentatively dated to the 4th century AD and at least three earlier floor surfaces were identified in addition to later features. A further excavation at Ewefields Farm Dutch barn in 2000 revealed a probable extension to the villa (Adams 2000; EWA 7008).

4.2 Occasional Roman finds have been made in Chesterton, including a Roman coin (HER MWA 903) found to the south in a private garden. A Roman coin and a scatter of building material was found also to the west (HER MWA 4528), and a further Roman coin and pottery was found to the east of the villa at Ewefields Farm (HER MWA 797, Fig. 1). Linear features and enclosures show up on aerial photographs to the north-east; although these are undated it is possible these also belong to the Roman period (MWA 4736).

4.3 The hamlet of Chesterton Green represents a small surviving part of the medieval settlement of Chesterton Magna. The site lies in the western part of this shrunken medieval settlement (HER MWA 6305). In the medieval period the village of Chesterton Magna was a polyfocal settlement with constituent parts which can still be recognised, although mostly as earthworks. The centres were at *Netherende* (HER MWA 789), *Churche Ende* (HER MWA 788), *Greneside* (HER MWA 781) and *Wygunhulend* (HER MWA 787). *Netherende*, around the present day Lodge Farm, was probably the main centre, at least in the later medieval period. The manor house was situated in *Church Ende* and was moated (HER MWA 6302). Fishponds associated with the manorial site survive as earthworks to the east of the manor (HER MWA 6303), whilst masonry indicative of a large building which may have been barns, a coach house and a dovecote belonging to the manor house (HER MWA 6304) was found to the west. The moated site and settlement remains are a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 35105). Four medieval silver coins have been found in a field to the east (MWA 8258).

4.4 On the northern edge of the remains of *Wygunhulend*, fragments of tile and a blue glass bead were found (HER MWA 4529). One tile fragment was likely to have been medieval or post-medieval, but the other artefacts are of unknown dates.

4.5 The development site lies within part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of *Greneside*, (SAM no. 35106). *Greneside* is shown covered in earthworks on aerial photographs taken in 1953 (Fig 2), including a holloway with ditched plots either side that presumably relate to individual medieval properties or paddocks. By 1976 the individual property boundaries were barely visible, although the holloway was still distinct, much as it is today.

4.6 Archaeological work in Chesterton Green has revealed more of the Romano-British and medieval remains of the hamlet. Stone walls were found during the excavation of a water pipe in 1994 (HER MWA 8261). The Warwickshire Archaeology Research Team undertook geophysical surveys and excavation in 2004 which revealed buildings and gardens associated with the manor (WART 2004). Recent archaeological observation of the excavation of a pipe

trench and ditch as part of a flood alleviation drainage scheme, across part of the shrunken medieval settlement, recorded three separate areas of limestone rubble of medieval date (Gethin 2008; EWA 9102). It was thought that the rubble spreads represented yard surfaces, street metalling or even the remains of ploughed-out buildings. Pottery recovered from the spreads dates from the 12th to late 15th centuries, with a single sherd of possible 11th-century date.

4.7 To the east is a moated site (MWA 790). A post-medieval manor house, demolished 1802 once stood to the east (MWA 791). A large quantity of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the back of the Humble Bee cottage (MWA 8259).

An archaeological evaluation at Green Farm, just to the south, recorded sherds of 15th-century pottery and the remains of ridge and furrow ploughing (EWA 9147). Archaeological recording took place at Hillside Cottage, on the other side of the Old Gated Road, in 2006 but no archaeological finds or features were recorded (EWA 9393). An evaluation at The Beeches similarly failed to produce archaeological finds or features (EWA 9253).

4.8 The Ordnance Survey maps of 1887, 1905 and 1925 show the development site as part of a field to the north of Green Farm. The present southern field boundary lies further north than that shown on the earlier maps. The old field boundary had been removed by 1972.

5 Watching Brief

5.1 A watching brief was carried out on March 4th 2013 to determine whether the removal of topsoil for a concrete base would disturb any archaeological remains associated with the medieval settlement, as the proposed development lies within the shrunken village of Chesterton Magna.

5.2 The area for the proposed stable lies to the very south of the field and adjacent to Green Farm. An area 6m long x 4.60m wide was stripped of between 0.18m and 0.22m using a 1.5 tonne tracked machine using a 1.00m wide toothless bucket. The excavation cut only into the brown clay loam topsoil (1) over most of the area; in some places the underlying layer, a brownish yellow clay loam with small pebbles and an occasional fragment of roof tile (2), was exposed.

5.3 No archaeological features were observed and no finds were recovered.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Although the field contains known archaeological remains associated with the medieval settlement of *Greneside*, and is in an area where Roman remains have been uncovered, nothing was found during this piece of recording. This is likely to be due to the shallow depth of soil stripping, and relatively small area examined, but may also indicate that this particular area was away from medieval buildings and so not intensively used.

Acknowledgements

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank the owner of the site, David Jackson, for commissioning the work and the County Planning Archaeologist for preparing the brief.

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Fig 2: Aerial Photo showing site in 1953 (SMR SP3458AI)



Fig 3: Area of ground reduction

