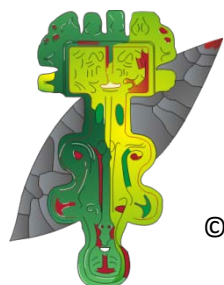


2014


Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief at
57 Abingdon Road, Dorchester on Thames, OX10 7LB



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On behalf of
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Summary

This document sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief designed to monitor all groundwork associated with the erection of a replacement single dwelling on land belong to 57 Abingdon Road, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire, OX10 7LB (the Project Site). The work was commissioned by AKT Planning and Architecture Ltd (the Agent) and was carried out on the 23rd and 30th April 2014.

The results revealed that significant groundwork had been carried out in the past resulting in the removal of the upper stratigraphy to the SW of the Project Site. This was followed by the re deposition of imported topsoil, which was seen to seal natural calcareous silty clay. Two sherds of Romano-British pottery were identified during the reduction of the driveway, along with two flint flakes. However, no associated features, layers or deposits were identified during the programme of investigation and the artefacts (whilst hinting at activity in the area) were not abundant enough to be significantly diagnostic on this occasion.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief designed to monitor all groundwork associated with the erection of a replacement single dwelling on land belong to 57 Abingdon Road, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire, OX10 7LB, hereafter referred to as the Project Site. The work has been commissioned by AKT Planning and Architecture Ltd (the Agent) and was carried out on the 23rd and 30th April 2014.

The requirement for an archaeological watching brief was informed by Condition 10 of the Planning Permission for planning ref P13/S1416/FUL which states that *'The applicant, or their agent, or successors in title, shall be responsible for organising and implementing an archaeological watching brief, to be maintained during the period of construction/during any groundworks taking place on the site. The watching brief shall be carried out by a professional organisation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation that has first been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.'*

The programme of work was carried out as a direct response to the document entitled '57 Abingdon Road, Dorchester-on-Thames Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief', issued by Mr R Oram, Planning Archaeologist, Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services.

The programme of archaeological work comprised a comprehensive watching brief allowing for the identification, recording and preservation of archaeological remains, to an appropriate level.

2. THE PROJECT SITE

The Project Site is located within the northern portion of Dorchester on Thames, with access gained off of Abingdon Road. The development area was occupied by a single residential dwelling, which was demolished prior to the watching brief.

The Project Site is located in an area of high archaeological potential, being situated just 100m SW of a significant Neolithic – Early Bronze Age ritual site (PRN 15323). Furthermore, finds dating from the Palaeolithic and Iron Age recovered on land <200m to the SE raise the potential for associated features to be preserved in the vicinity of the Project Site.

Geologically the site is defined by Quaternary deposits, Northmoor sand and gravel member (NO1B) overlying early Cretaceous Gault Clay formation. The site lays c.50m aOD.

3. **APPROACH TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

The broad aim of the watching brief was to identify and record features of archaeological interest discovered during groundwork associated with the development, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource and to enable the discharge of the planning condition.

All work was undertaken in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (revised 2008).

The primary aims were to:

- Seek to assess the potential for archaeological activity associated with the project site;
- Record and identify archaeological features and deposits to a level appropriate to their extent and significance;
- Undertake sufficient post-excavation assessment to interpret archaeological features and phasing identified during site works, and to place these within their local and regional context;
- Create a site archive for deposition in a suitable repository.

4. **RESULTS**

Phase one of the groundwork comprised the reduction of the driveway, to a depth of 300mm below the current ground level. The excavation revealed 250mm of re deposited topsoil sealing a truncated natural clay layer. A single circular feature identified to the NE of site was seen to contain 19th century ceramic sherds and fragments of red brick, along with a residual sherd of Romano- British pottery, within the fill (3). The feature was interpreted as a post medieval garden feature.

Phase two comprised the excavation of foundation trenches in the region of the recently demolished dwelling. Groundwork was undertaken by mechanical excavation, using a 500mm (w) grading bucket. Excavation of the strip foundations revealed <700mm of re-deposited topsoil (7), sealing a layer of compact calcareous silty clays (8). No natural topsoil or subsoil was preserved in the region of the demolished dwelling and it is interpreted that significant ground disturbance has succeeded in truncating the natural layers.

Apart from the small circular feature identified in the vicinity of the driveway, no archaeological features, layers or deposits were identified as a result of the programme of work.

4.1. Finds

Two sherds of potential Romano-British pottery were identified during the reduction of the driveway (photos 5-8), along with two flint flakes. One residual rim sherd was recovered from the fill (3) of the post medieval circular feature, noted above.

4.2. Discussion

The proximity of the site, opposite a significant prehistoric ritual complex raised the potential for associated features to be identified in the vicinity of the development area. However, the excavation revealed that the Project Site has been reduced in the past, most significantly in the vicinity of the previous dwelling. This may have resulted in the destruction of shallow features and the removal of historic land surfaces. The truncated remains of deeper features had the potential to survive, however no such activity was identified on the Project Site.

The sherds of pottery and flint flakes attest to activity in the vicinity, however the amount is too low to be significantly diagnostic.

5. CONCLUSION

The results revealed that significant groundwork has already been carried out to the SW of the Project Site, resulting in the removal of the upper stratigraphy.

Apart from the recovered of a low amount of residual finds and a post medieval feature, the results of the investigation were negative and no further investigation is recommended in association with the current programme of work.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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7. FIGURES

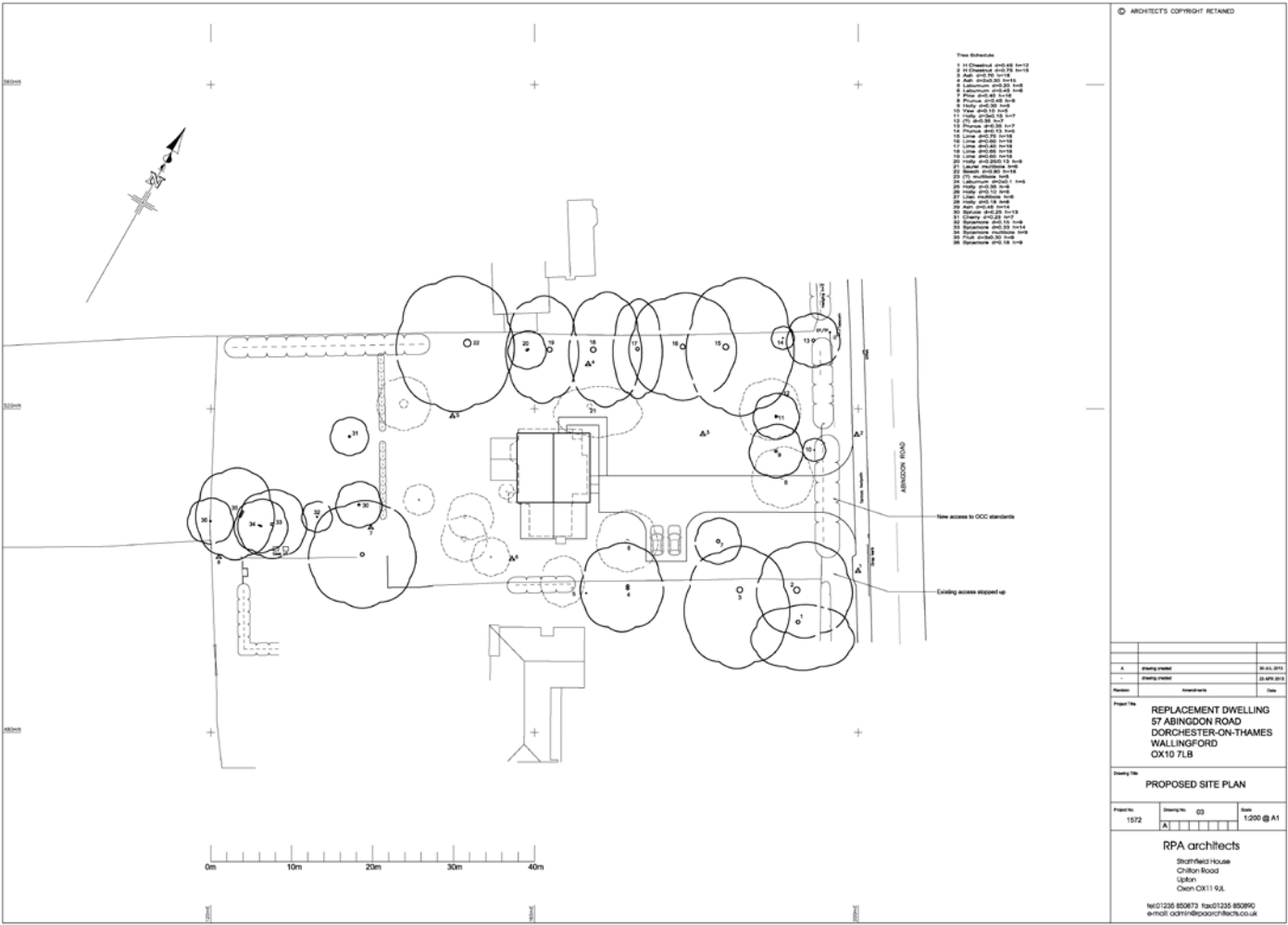
Figure 1 Site Location



Figure 2: Detailed Site Location – Project Site Outline in Red



Figure 3: Revised Plan © RPA Architects



8. PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1 SW facing view of reduction of driveway



Photo 2 NNW facing section (Scales 1 x 1m & 1 x 300mm)



Photo 3 SSE facing section of foundation trench (Scales 1 x 1m & 1 x 500mm)



Photo 4 NNE facing view of strip foundation (Scale 1 x 1m)



Photo 5 South Facing View of Post Medieval Feature (Scales 1 x 300mm & 1 x 500mm)



Photo 6 Romano British ceramic rim sherd from context (3)



Photo 7 Rim sherd profile context (3)



Photo 8 Romano British rim sherd



Photo 9 Rim sherd profile



Photo 10 Flint Flakes



9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Context Description

Phase One							
Description: Machine excavated linear trench-Driveway reduction					Orientation		NE-SW
					Depth		300mm
					Width		3m
					Length		20m
Contexts 1-5							
Context Number	Type	Depth/ Height	Width	Length /Diameter	Colour	Finds	Recorded Date
1	Modern Tarmac Surface	50mm	>3m	-		-	23.04.2014
2	Re-deposited Topsoil	250mm	>3m	15m	Brownish Yellow 10YR 6/6	-	23.04.2014
3	Fill of Circular Feature [4]	>150mm	800mm	800mm	Light Yellowish Brown 10YR 5/4	Residual Finds Including a sherd of RB, 18 th and 19 th century pottery. Date=Modern	23.04.2014
4	Cut of Circular Feature	150mm	800mm	800mm	-	-	23.04.2014
5	Silty Calcareous Clay (Natural)	350mm	-	>400m	Very Pale Brown 10YR 7/4	-	30.04.2014

Phase Two							
Description: Machine Excavated Strip Foundations					Orientation	-	
					Depth	1.1m	
					Width	700mm	
					Length	54m	
Contexts 6-8							
Context Number	Type	Depth/ Height	Width	Length /Diameter	Colour	Finds	Recorded Date
6	Topsoil/Turfline	<350mm	>700mm	-	Brownish Yellow 10YR 6/6	-	23.04.2014
7	Re-deposited Topsoil	<700mm	>700mm	-	Brownish Yellow 10YR 6/6	-	30.04.2014
8	Truncated Natural. Calcareous Silty Gravel	>100mm	>700mm	-	Very Pale Brown 10YR 7/4	-	30.04.2014

Appendix 2 Finds Ceramic

Context Number	Fabric Type	Amount	Weight in Grammes	Period
(+)	Ceramic- Grey Ware	1	1g	Romano-British
3	Ceramic-Grey Ware	1	4g	Romano-British
Totals	-	2	5g	-

Appendix 3 Finds Flint

Context Number	Fabric Type	Amount	Weight in Grammes	Period
(+)	Flint Flakes	2	<1g	Prehistoric
Totals	-	3	1g	-

Appendix 4 Chronological Table

Period	Date	Information
Prehistoric	800000 – 43 AD	Generalised period from the earliest human activity in Britain (Happisburgh) to the conquest of Britain by Claudius.
Palaeolithic	800000 - 10000 BC	Mobile groups, ephemeral habitation evidence, stone tool technology. Material evidence found predominantly in caves. Earliest evidence for hominins in Britain is at Happisburgh and Pakefield in Norfolk dating to the Early Pleistocene c.800,000 BP.
Mesolithic	10000 – 4000 BC	Period of major transformation in the European environment and landscape after the end of the last Ice Age. Mobile hunter-gatherer communities, sophisticated tool technology and some semi-permanent settlement, particularly along the east coast of England and in Ireland.
Neolithic	4000 – 2350 BC	Emergence of monumental architecture, such as long barrows and causewayed enclosures. Movement towards more complex society and sedentary lifestyles.
Bronze Age	2350 – 800 BC	Introduction of Bronze, construction of barrows/tumuli for the dead in the early stages replaced by a lack of monuments and the preponderance toward hoard deposition.
Iron Age	800 BC– 43 AD	Introduction of Iron and the return of monumental architecture in the form of hillforts, tribal boundaries and the introduction of coinage.
Romano-British	43-410 AD	Romano-British period including the emergence of villas and Roman infrastructure.
Anglo-Saxon	410 –1066 AD	Post-Roman period including Saxon invasions and the arrival of Christianity.
Medieval	1066 – 1540 AD	Medieval period in Britain including Tudor activity, with the dissolution of the monasteries as the closing of the period.

Post-Medieval	1540 – 1900 AD	Period of rapid industrial development and changes to the English landscape.
Modern	1900 – 1950 AD	Including WWI, WWII and Cold War archaeology.