



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**Archaeological observation and recording on
land adjacent to**

11 Egerton Close, Brackley

Iain Soden

Fieldwork conducted by Rob Jones, *Archaeology Warwickshire*

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Summary

Archaeological monitoring of foundation trenches on land adjacent to 11 Egerton Road, Brackley indicates that no archaeological horizons in the vicinity survived either the construction of the existing housing development or subsequent landscaping which had involved terracing the garden. No archaeology was present and no finds were forthcoming.

Introduction

Egerton Close, although predominantly developed for housing some decades ago, lies within the curving arc of St Peter's Road, an ancient thoroughfare which has long characterised the 'Old Town' of Brackley, lying largely east of High Street, separate from the later (but still medieval) 'New Town', with its castle at the southern end of Brackley High Street. Plots in the so-called Old Town have the potential to date from as far back as the late Saxon period and occasional finds in the vicinity suggest such longevity. The pre-modern road layout of the Old Town still survives (Fig 1) and the site can be seen to lie in what had become enclosed fields by 1760. Today there remain a few small areas not taken up with existing houses and on the rare occasion that new development occurs in the vicinity, the remaining archaeological potential is considered. The construction of a new house adjacent to the existing 11 Egerton Close, Brackley, NN13 7DU, is one such instance (NGR: SP 591 375; S/2019/2218/FUL). A programme of archaeological monitoring was required as a condition of planning consent in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation.

The site is sandwiched between existing housing (Fig 2) and at the time of fieldwork was a garden which was terraced in an arc to the west of the house and surrounded an attached, secondary carport. This indicated that the ground of the garden fell about 1m from the adjacent houses at the north and west down to the floor level of the existing 11 Egerton Close (Fig 3). This it seems to have done in either one or probably two drops, according to the space available.

The foundations for the new house were machine-dug on 17 November 2020 in good weather conditions and, as outside construction work, within the permitted bounds of national Covid-19 restrictions.

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Fig 1: Brackley Old Town in 1760. The site is starred in an agricultural enclosure off the curve of St Peter's Rd.



Fig 2: Site location (arrowed) in modern Brackley. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2020

Fieldwork and Results

As preparation of the site, a secondary lean-to car port was demolished at the side of 11 Egerton Close. This rested on a concrete base and this too was broken up and removed, accounting for about half of the new house-footprint. The foundation trenches for the new house were then machine-dug under archaeological scrutiny. Each was 800mm (minimum) deep and 600mm wide, for the footing of each of the three load-bearing outer walls of the simple, four-square footprint of the

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new property (Figs 4 and 5). They were dug through redeposited topsoil and light grey clays, into the natural stiff buff Jurassic clay and limestone beneath.



Fig 3: The site, looking north with car-port base still *in situ*. Note the two drops in garden level indicating modern terraces (arrowed). A sudden drop is also present along the dashed line. The houses to the north are built from a higher level, the plots separated from those of Egerton Close by a low stone retaining wall.

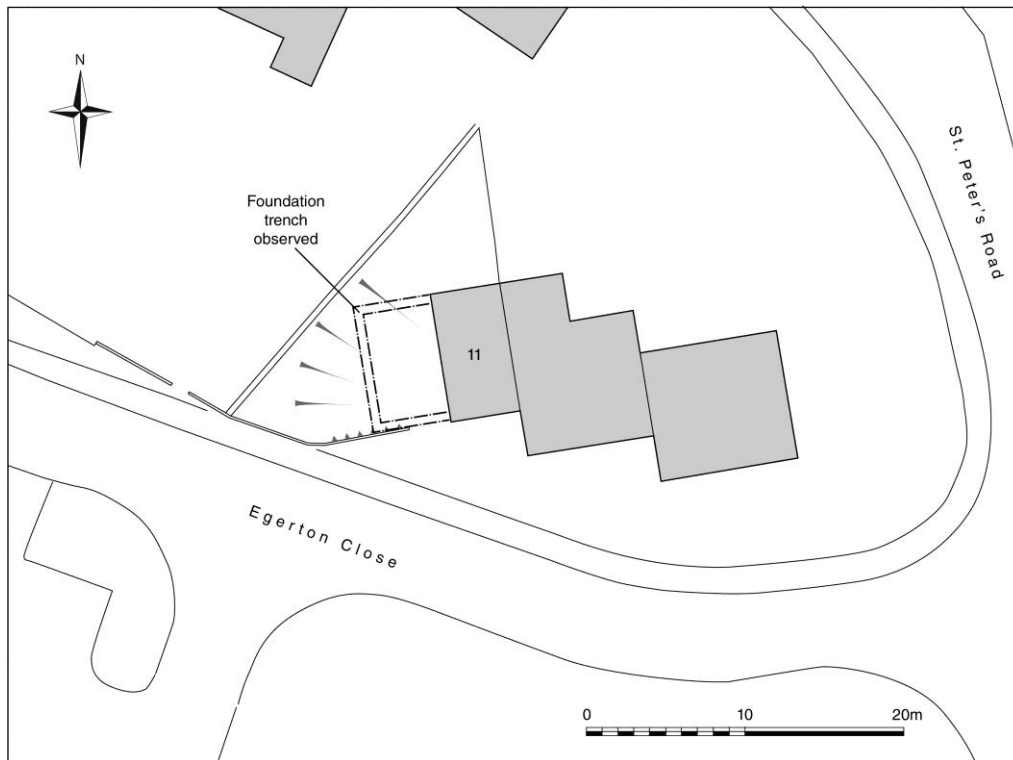


Fig 4: Plan with location of foundation trenches and hachures showing terracing (Andy Isham, after Roger Coy Partnership, with thanks)



Fig 5: View of the northernmost foundation trench, showing the deliberate garden make-up above the terracing to the natural geology (dashed line). A slightly higher terrace lies to the west out of the picture at left as the plot narrows; Scale 1m

It was clear that the terrace seen on the grassed garden surface (Figs 3 and 4) was mirrored beneath by the base of the garden soil, underlying redeposited light grey clays and the hard buff clay and limestone of the undisturbed natural geology (Fig 5). This was probably machined flat and stepped in a previous construction-process, either when no 11 and its neighbours were built, or subsequently when the car-port to no 11 was put in. Some such work may have accompanied both construction regimes which would have been advisable to aid rainwater drainage at a distance from both the house and car port and aid the practicalities of garden-use.

Conclusions

The garden to 11 Egerton Close has previously been terraced. It is unclear whether this took place when no 11 was built or when a secondary car port was added to the side of the house. It is possible that some such groundwork took place separately as preparation for each.

Monitoring showed that the terracing has removed almost all possibility of archaeology surviving to the present development since the natural geology has been reduced and flattened in both terrace levels encountered. In the event no archaeology was present and there were no finds.

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Appendix *OASIS data*

Project Name	11 Egerton Close, Brackley
OASIS ID	409489
Project Type	Watching Brief
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Iain Soden
Previous/future work	No
Current land use	Garden
Development type	Domestic
Reason for investigation	Planning Condition
National grid reference	SP 591 375
Start/end dates of fieldwork	17 November 2020
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	c 100 sq m



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4 December 2020