

# Land at Lansdown Court, Lansdown Road, Charlecombe, Bath

## Report on Archaeological Watching Brief

B&NES Application Ref. 11/00349/FUL



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## Avon Archaeology Limited

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## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS  
NOTES  
COPYRIGHT  
ABBREVIATIONS

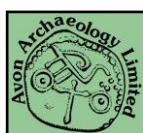
- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 SITE GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY
- 3 METHODOLOGY
- 4 THE MONITORING
- 5 CONCLUSIONS
- 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

## FIGURES

- 1 Site Location
- 2 Site Topographic Survey with Location of Monitored Foundations

## PLATES

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| Cover | Looking north at the excavated foundations                           |
| 1     | Looking north at the site  |
| 2     | Detail of the excavation in section                                  |
| 3     | Looking north-east along the north foundation trench of the building |

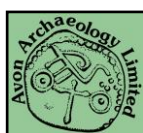




## ABSTRACT

*Avon Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Crossman (Lansdown) Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording (Archaeological Watching Brief) during groundworks associated with the construction of a new leisure and amenity building at Lansdown Court, Lansdown Road, Bath, part of a wider development the main element of which involves the conversion and refurbishment of existing buildings on the site. The leisure building was intended as the only completely new structure. An attenuation tank was also excavated but unfortunately Avon Archaeology were not present for those works.*

*The watching brief within the footprint of the new leisure building was negative, and no features or deposits of any archaeological interest were identified during the course of the work.*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Avon Archaeology Limited wishes to acknowledge the assistance given by the site staff of Crossman (Lansdown) Ltd, all of whom extended every courtesy, kindness and forbearance during the course of the project.

## NOTES

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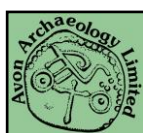
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## ABBREVIATIONS

AAL	Avon Archaeology Ltd
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum

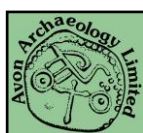


## 1 INTRODUCTION

Avon Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Crossman (Lansdown) Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during works to construct a new leisure building at a site at Lansdown Court, Charlcombe, Bath, part of a wider development involving the conversion and refurbishment of existing, modern buildings on the site, for residential use.

The project was intended to fulfil a condition of the planning consent relating to application ref: 11/00349/FUL, as set out by the planning department at Bath and North East Somerset Council. The site is centred on OS NGR ST 73290 68071, and lies on the south-western side of the Lansdown Road as it heads south-east at this point, into the centre of the city of Bath. The site consisted of fields until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and it is thought that the present large house was constructed in the late 1970s or 1980s. It lies at the site's north-eastern end, set just back from the main road, together with associated outbuildings immediately to its south, close to the south-eastern side of the plot (**Figures 1 and 2**). The site in its entirety is of a regular rectangular shape, and a maximum of just over 200m along its long axis, south-west/north-east, and in width (north-west/south-east), 60m. The site therefore encompasses a total area of about 1.2ha. The north-eastern two-thirds of the site is effectively level, and lies at a height of about 228m aOD. However, the south-western third of the site is a paddock which lies on an artificial terrace sloping gently to the south-west, and at a level that is about 2m lower than the ground to the north-east. This area contains a small, circular helicopter landing pad. The division between the two areas is marked by a revetment wall running north-west/south-east. The new leisure building is a simple rectangle in shape, and lies hard against the site's north-western boundary, with its long axis parallel to the boundary, and its north-eastern gable end about 30m from the south-western frontage of the main house. The building itself is about 15m in length and about 7m at its maximum width.

The watching project was guided by the methodology set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation which was produced by Kim Watkins (Archaeological Consultant) in response to criteria outlined by Mr Richard Sermon, Archaeological Officer for B&NES Council (Watkins 2013). The project was required to satisfy a planning condition which required that access to the site should be given for a competent and qualified archaeologist to observe



and record all ground disturbance during construction, to enable any remains of archaeological interest which may exist within the site to be properly, correctly and fully recorded. Monitoring at the site was carried out over two consecutive days, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.

## 2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY & ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site is located on the south-western side of Lansdown Road, Charlcombe, Bath. It is bounded by Lansdown Road to the north and east, by the Lansdown Park and Ride to the north and west and by open fields to the south and east. The site itself is a rectangular plot of approximately 11100 square metres with its long axis orientated south-west to north-east. The main house, which will be retained, is located at the north-east end of the site. The focus of the watching brief was groundworks associated with the construction of a new leisure building located close to the north-western boundary of the site (**Figure 2**).

The British Geological Survey online viewer lists the underlying geology of the site as;

*Chalfield Oolite Formation - Limestone, Ooidal. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 166 to 168 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. Local environment previously dominated by shallow carbonate seas.*

The following brief historical and archaeological background is condensed from that given in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Watkins 2013).

The Lansdown plateau contains a number of Bronze Age barrows, including within the field directly south of the site. They, like the majority of barrows on Lansdown have been heavily truncated by agriculture and excavation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The nearest recorded barrow is approximately 100m south-east of the site.



Evidence suggests that Lansdown Road is a very early route. It almost certainly existed as a Roman road but may have earlier Prehistoric origins.

The site therefore had potential to reveal deposits or features of Prehistoric date, in particular Bronze Age along with a lower potential for Romano-British features or deposits.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

The project methodology was determined in a WSI prepared by Kim Watkins in 2013. The WSI was prepared in response to criteria set out as a condition of planning by the archaeological officer for B&NES (application ref: 11/00349/FUL). The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Monitoring took place during October 2017 under the supervision of Dr Nick Corcos and the author.

With the exception of excavations relating to an attenuation tank, all groundworks were monitored. A photographic record of development groundworks was maintained accompanied by handwritten notes.

The project will be entered into the Bath Historic Environments Record and a copy of this report will be placed within the OASIS archaeological database.

#### 4 THE MONITORING

The concrete floor of the former barn building, which lay within the area of the new leisure facility, was removed along with topsoil across the entire area of the new building's footprint (**Plate 1**).

The topsoil was approximately 0.40m deep (**Plate 2**) and directly over the surface of the underlying natural substrate, which was weathered limestone within a matrix of yellow brown sandy clay. Essentially this meant that there was no potential for buried archaeology within to footprint of the new building, however the excavation of subsequent foundations was monitored in order to confirm this. The foundations were excavated to an average depth of 0.50m below the reduced level, revealing intercolating bands of limestone and clay (**Plate 3**).

No archaeologically significant features or deposits were recorded.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief recorded no archaeologically significant features or deposits. It was also noted that there was an absence of clearly defined subsoil, the presence of which can point to the potential for buried layers of historic human activity, agricultural or occupation. The absence of subsoil within the area of excavation suggests the area to be of low archaeological potential.

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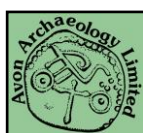




Figure 1



### Site Location



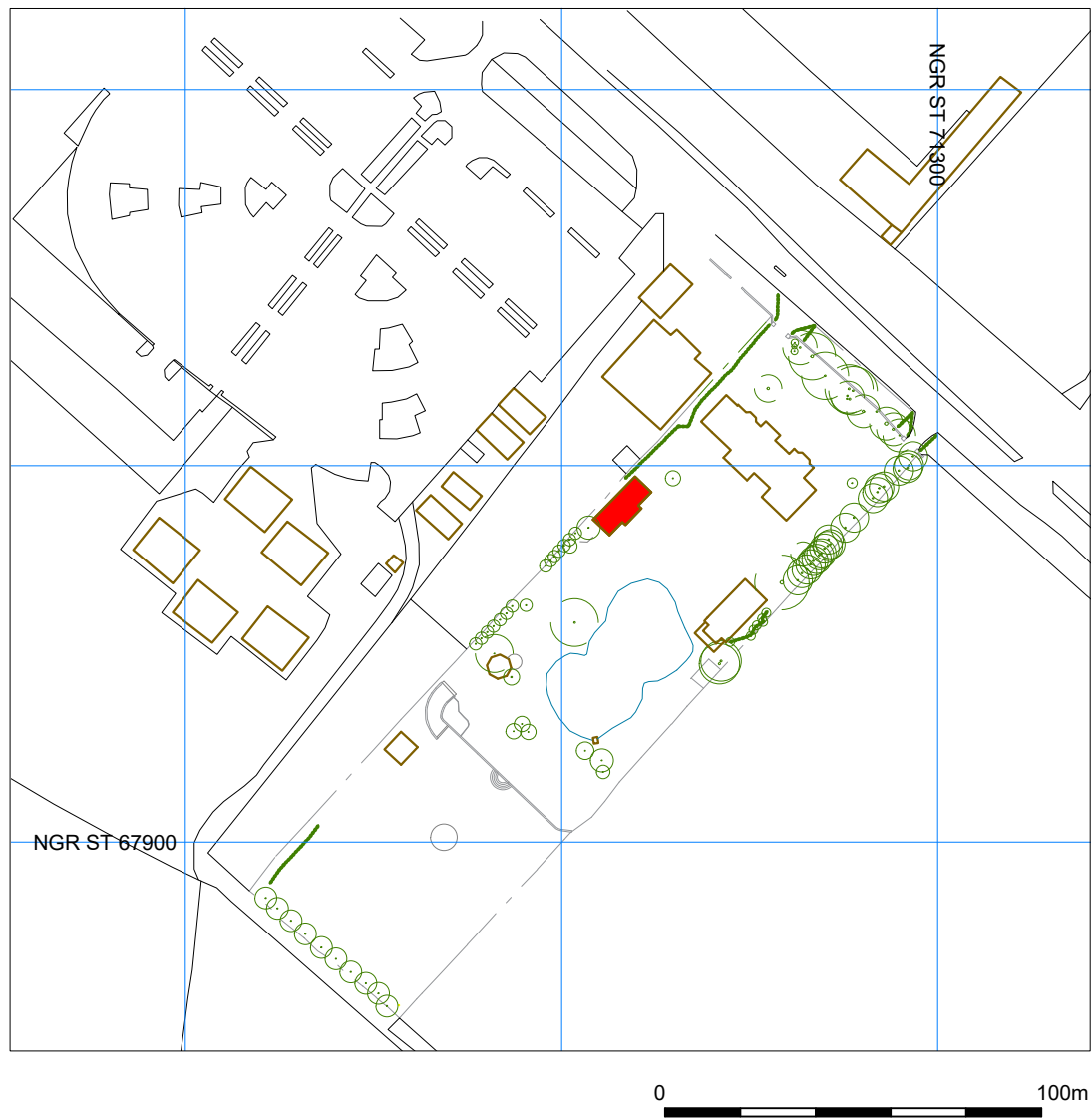
Not to scale



Figure 2



Site Topographic Survey with Location of Monitored Foundations





## Plates



Plate 1. Looking north at the site



Plate 2. Detail of the excavation in section.  
Scale has 20cm divisions



Plate 3. Looking north-east along the north  
foundation trench of the new building