

THE OLD VINE, 8 GREAT MINSTER STREET, WINCHESTER

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 *The following report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by AOC Archaeology between 13th and 16th March 2006 at the Old Vine public house, 8 Great Minster Street, Winchester (NGR SU 4806 2938), on behalf of Ian Beach Associates Ltd.*

Excavation was limited to an area no larger than 5.25 square metres and no deeper than 0.45 metres. It was evident that the ground had been built up during the construction of the 20th century courtyard. No in-situ archaeological remains were observed.

2 INTRODUCTION

Site Location

- 2.1 The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 4806 2938 (Figure 1), and is within land bounded by houses to the north and south, ‘The Square’ to the east, and Little Minster Street to the west. The site is roughly rectangular in shape and measures 21.06m by 13.78m (Figure 2). The area affected by the development covers a total area of approximately 12.5 square metres.
- 2.2 Currently the site is occupied by a courtyard. The proposed development is for a single storey extension to the existing structure.

Planning Background

- 2.3 The local planning authority is Winchester City Council. Archaeological advice to the council is provided by Tracy Matthews, Sites and Monuments Officer to Winchester City Council.
- 2.4 Planning permission to undertake the development has been granted under the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) (Case No; 05/03034/FUL), subject to conditions. Condition 3 states that:

“No development or site preparation prior to operations which has any effect on disturbing or altering the level of composition of the land, shall take place within the site until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation to be submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority”.

- 2.5 This condition has been required in accordance with *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16) issued by the Department of the Environment in 1990 (DoE, 1990), and was recommended by Tracy Matthews, archaeology advisor to Winchester City Council.
- 2.6 The archaeological investigation was required to inform the planning decision about an appropriate mitigation strategy for the destruction of the potential archaeological resource.

Scope of Works

- 2.7 The Watching Brief was conducted upon the trenching for the new drain services and ground reduction for the concrete slab in the area shown in Figure 2.
- 2.8 Two drain runs were excavated, the first of which measured 1.00m x 1.05m. The second drain run was L-shaped and was no more than 0.41m wide. It extended

- 2.40m east west and 1.35m north south. Excavations did not exceed 0.30m.
- 2.9 The ground reduction for the concrete slab was 0.20m deep in an area measuring 1.00m x 2.10m. A Watching Brief was maintained throughout these works.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1 Winchester is situated in a narrow stretch of the Itchen valley, which is cut into chalk of the upper cretaceous period. The valley bottom is covered by alluvial deposits including flint gravels at the base, then peat and silt.
- 3.2 The site is located around 230m west of the main course of the River Itchen at approximately 42.50mOD, lying at the foot of the valley. The ground becomes flat towards the river to the east of The Old Vine.
- 3.3 No geotechnical investigations have been conducted within the proposed development area.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 A Desk Based Assessment was not required for this project as the site is located within the well-documented core of the Roman, Saxon and medieval city.
- 4.2 No previous archaeological investigations have been undertaken on the site itself.
- 4.3 The following account is a summary. Further information pertaining to the archaeological and historical background can be found in the Written Scheme of Investigation.

Prehistoric (before c.AD 43)

- 4.4 Much of the evidence for the earliest occupation of the area now occupied by Winchester comes from the western bank of the river, starting in the Middle Bronze Age, and culminating in the Middle Iron Age enclosure called Oram's Arbour. Important Bronze Age occupation sites are also known from the east side of the river, to the north-east of the site, for example at the Winnall Down and Easton Lane sites. It has also been suggested that the High Street itself is a prehistoric route, leading to a natural ford created by an island in the middle of the river.

Roman (c. AD 43 - 450)

- 4.5 The settlement originated at a fording place where the floodplain narrowed, and the river flowed around a chalk island produced by an underground spring bringing chalk 'tufa' to the surface.

- 4.6 Despite the abandonment of Oram's Arbour in the Late Iron Age, Winchester's importance continued into the Roman period with the creation of the civitas of Venta Belgarum, a regional capital of the Belgae tribe, in the 1st century AD. Claudian timber buildings have been found, and Biddle suggested that a fort was established on the tufa island soon after the Claudian invasion in 43 AD. Apart from suggestions of cultivation on the island from this period, it is more likely that occupation of the valley bottom started in the Flavian period (69-96 AD). At the end of the 1st century the street grid was formally laid out in the floodplain. The town was periodically flooded until the end of the 2nd century, when the river was diverted and defences were built. A 1st century drainage channel running parallel to an E-W street illustrates the establishment of a drainage system soon after settlement.
- 4.7 The High Street runs on a similar alignment just to the north of the main Roman E-W road, itself perhaps a prehistoric trackway. The road consisted of a layer of gravel metalling which abutted a Roman wall possibly associated with a roadside ditch. The forum was to the south of this road, in the Cathedral Green area. A substantial Roman masonry structure, possibly a public building, with a colonnade fronting the main Roman road was uncovered near High Street. Two further buildings adjacent to the previous site have been recorded, revealing evidence of floor surfaces, tiles and coins of the House of Constantine. Excavations prior to the building of the Brooks shopping centre revealed high status properties which were in use until the 4th century. Following this the Roman buildings and drainage works and fell into disrepair, although there is some evidence for the subsequent use of the buildings for industrial purposes.

Anglo-Saxon (c.451-1065)

- 4.8 The Saxon period saw *Wintanceaster* reach the height of its importance as a religious and political centre. The Old Minster, founded c.648 AD, was made a cathedral in 676 AD, while King Alfred founded New Minster in 901 AD and Ealhswith, his queen, Nunnaminster in 903 AD, all on the south end of the chalk island.
- 4.9 At the same time Alfred also established a new street pattern for his capital, seemingly with defence against the Vikings in mind. Its relationship to the Roman grid is unclear. The High Street remained as the principal E-W route, with the Brooks Streets running north from it. Traces of two timber buildings of c. 8th century date have been discovered along the course of the main road. A later phase of construction on the site recovered a scraet, provisionally dated to AD 720-730. At what point the Brook Streets received their characteristic streams is unclear: in 964 AD Bishop Ethelwold enclosed the Minsters and his reorganisation of the city also extended to the north, where his 'making of the conduits' is identified with the creation of the Brook Streets, although others credit Alfred's earlier planning. As a whole the Saxon street layout, established by

the end of the 10th century, provides the basis for the modern street plan, with subsequent alterations.

Medieval (c.1066 - 1485)

- 4.10 Political power gradually moved away from Winchester following the Norman Conquest, although it was the centre for the compilation of the Domesday Book. Keene's Survey of Medieval Winchester (1985) suggests that the running water of the Brooks streets ensured that it continued as an industrial area. Between the 12th and 14th centuries it seems that the needs of cloth finishing, particularly dyeing, displaced the leather workers downstream, while parchment making shifted east from Parchment Street to the better-watered Brooks. Archaeological evidence for tanning has been found in Buck Street (Busket Lane) in the form of wood-lined pits. Other trades also flourished in this area, with a fishmonger, vintner, baker, goldsmith and carpenter also attested during the Middle Ages. Between Upper and Middle Brook Street, there was a Franciscan friary, illustrating that religion still dominated the Winchester townscape.

Post-Medieval (c.1485 - modern)

- 4.11 There was major increase in Winchester's population in the 19th century, partly due to industrialisation and the coming of the London-Southampton railway in 1839. The result was an infilling of the town with cramped housing. In 1953 a slum clearance in this area resulted in the relocation of some industry, as well as the destruction of a number of medieval buildings.

The Old Vine, 8 Great Minster Street

- 4.12 In the 16th century, Great Minster Street was known as 'Constable Rewe' and contained a series of substantial houses fronting the cathedral cemetery. The houses in Great Minster Street were built against the substantial physical barrier represented by the western boundary wall of the Norman royal palace and their front doors faced onto the market place in the cathedral cemetery. By 1316, Robert de Colyngebourne acquired two tenements on the site, each in the Constabulary of Winchester Castle and extending from Minster Street (now Little Minster Street) to the cathedral cemetery. After Colyngebourne's death his property appears to have been divided into three separate tenements. By 1334 his widow Joan was in possession of the southernmost tenement, probably as her widow's dower. On 19 January 1334 de Colyngebourne's son, also called Robert, granted the middle tenement to Dom. John, son of John le Couk of Winchester. From the early 1330s, the properties appear to have been held by the taverner Walter atte Crouche, also known as Walter de Helle.
- 4.13 A stone cellar, probably dating from the 14th century, occupies 8 Great Minster Street. The front compartment of the cellar, which includes a row of lancet windows in the wall by Great Minster Street, measures almost *c.* 24 feet in width

against the street, projecting 5 feet into the street. The rear compartment consists of a rectangular barrel-vaulted compartment extending back almost to the modern Little Minster Street frontage. The two compartments of the cellar are connected by a doorway through a two-centred arch flanked by two smaller openings like serving hatches. Architecturally, this cellar could have achieved its present form during Walter de Helle's occupancy. Its internal arrangements suggest that it could have been a tavern, the rear compartment being used for storage and the relatively well-lit front compartment for the accommodation of customers. The main entry for barrels would probably have been at the west end from Little Minster Street, where there are signs of a blocked opening (Keene, 1985).

5 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

5.1 The aims of the watching brief were defined as being:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the area of development impact, to assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits and to determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
- To mitigate by record the development impact on surviving archaeological deposits.
- To enable the Sites and Monuments Officer for Winchester City Council to make an informed decision on the status of the planning application, and any possible further work required before the condition is discharged.

5.2 The specific objectives of the Watching Brief as defined by the Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2006) were to:

- Determine the presence of any remains of Prehistoric date.
- Determine the presence of any remains of Roman or Saxon date on the site.
- Determine the presence of any remains of Medieval date on the site.
- Assess the degree and extent of truncation of earlier deposits by the phases of late post-medieval and modern buildings on the site.

5.3 The final aim was to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 All works were conducted in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2006).
- 6.2 Prior to commencing work a unique code for the project (**WINCM: AY267**) was obtained.
- 6.3 All excavations were carried out under the constant supervision and observation of an experienced archaeologist.
- 6.4 Trenches were excavated for the placement of drainage pipes. Excavation continued until the contractor reached the required depth.
- 6.5 The total area excavated covered no more than 5.25 square metres, and extended no deeper than 0.45m. The majority of excavations were less than 0.30m deep.
- 6.6 As no archaeologically significant deposits were encountered, there was no excavation by hand other than for examination and recording.
- 6.7 The watching brief was undertaken by Andrew Leonard and Ken Bazley under the overall project management of Mark Beasley for AOC Archaeology.

7 RESULTS

- 7.1 Initially a drain run was excavated which went to a depth of 0.42m below ground surface. It measured 1.00m x 1.05m. The earliest observable deposit was loosely compacted dark brown sandy silt (002), which contained moderate to frequent fragments of 20th century ceramic building material. Other materials present within this deposit included various pieces of plastic. Finds were not retained as they were demonstrably modern. It is probable that this deposit was made ground directly related to the concrete courtyard surface (001), which overlies it. A sample section (Figure 3) was drawn to demonstrate the stratigraphy, which can be summarised as:

0.00-0.08m (001). Concrete

0.08-0.42m (002). Loose dark brown sandy silt with modern inclusions.

- 7.2 An L-shaped drain run measured 0.41m x 2.40m east west and 0.40m x 1.35m north south. It was excavated no deeper than 0.30m below ground surface. Stratigraphy was as described above.
- 7.3 The final excavation involved the breaking out of concrete slab in an area measuring 1.00m north south x 2.10m east west x 0.20m deep. The stratigraphy was as described in paragraph 7.1.

78 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The groundworks at The Old Vine intrude upon an area of made ground which is highly likely to be part of 20th century construction activity. It would appear that land to the rear of the property has been deliberately raised and levelled to facilitate the creation of an outdoor area. There was no evidence of any intrusive activity.
- 8.2 Due to the fact that the excavations did not fully penetrate the made ground, archaeological deposits could not be observed. However, this neither precludes the possibility that they might occur beneath the 20th century deposits, nor does it determine a definite presence.
- 8.3 Despite the methodology being appropriate for the scope of works, the very nature of the works meant that it was not possible to accurately determine the presence or absence of Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, or Medieval archaeological strata within the confines of the site.
- 8.4 There are no further scheduled excavations at The Old Vine, and therefore no further archaeological works are recommended.
- 8.5 Publication will be by OASIS form and include an electronic copy of the watching brief report which will be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS), once approved by the Sites and Monument Officer of Winchester City Council.

89 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

APPENDIX A - CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
1	Concrete slab	Trench	Trench	0.08m
2	Loosely compacted dark brown sandy silt with frequent CBM and plastic	Trench	Trench	0.34m

APPENDIX B - OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: AOCARCHA1-13978

Project details

Project name	The Old Vine, 8 Great Minster St, Winchester
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief undertaken by AOC Archaeology between 13th and 16th March 2006 at the Old Vine public house, 8 Great Minster Street, Winchester (NGR SU 4806 2938), on behalf of Ian Beach Associates Ltd. Excavation was limited to an area no larger than 5.25 sq. metres and no deeper than 0.45 metres. It was evident that the ground had been heavily disturbed during the construction of the 20th century courtyard. No in situ archaeological remains were observed.
Project dates	Start: 13-03-2006 End: 16-03-2006
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	7509 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	WINCM AY267 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	05/03034/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England
Site location HAMPSHIRE WINCHESTER WINCHESTER The Old Vine, 8 Great Minster Street, Winchester
Postcode SO23 9HA
Study area 12.50 Square metres
National grid reference SU 4806 2938 Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation AOC Archaeology Group
Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator AOC Archaeology Group
Project director/manager Mark Beasley
Project supervisor Ken Bazley
Sponsor or funding body Ian Beach Associates Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive Winchester Museum

recipient

Digital Archive ID WINCM: AY267

Digital Media available 'Images raster'

Paper Archive recipient Winchester Museum

Paper Archive ID WINCM: AY267

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media available 'Correspondence', 'Diary', 'Drawing', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section', 'Unpublished Text'

Paper Archive notes 'Diary' refers to watching brief daily log.

Project bibliography 1

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