

MOTORWAY SERVICE AREA AT BURTLEY WOOD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

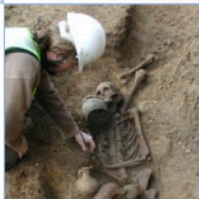
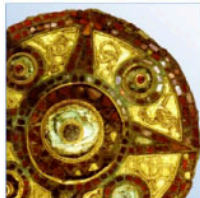
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National Grid Reference Number: SU 952 887

AOC Project no: 30035

Accession Number: AYBCM:2008.139

Date: October 2008



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MOTORWAY SERVICE AREA AT BURTLEY WOOD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

On Behalf of:	Giffords Bankside Studios 76 – 80 Southwark Street London SE1 0PN
National Grid Reference (NGR):	SU 952 887
AOC Project No:	30035
Accession No:	AYBCM:2008.139
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Date of Report:	October 2008

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Non-Technical Summary

Between 3rd March 2008 and 17th June 2008 AOC Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at a proposed Motorway Service Area at Burtley Wood, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 952 887) on behalf of Giffords.

The watching brief was required due to the developments' proximity to Bower Wood scheduled medieval moat.

The watching brief revealed no archaeological finds or features.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is a report on an Archaeological Watching Brief undertaken at the proposed Motorway Service area at Burtley Wood, Buckinghamshire (Figure 1). The work was undertaken on behalf of Giffords.
- 1.2 The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 952 887, and comprises a roughly rectangular area of approximately 11 hectares. The site is bounded to the northeast and northwest by the A335 and the M40 respectively and by Burtley Woods to the southeast and southwest.
- 1.3 The Motorway Services site was occupied by a timber yard to the northwest, paddocks to the north, a ploughed field to the southwest and areas of open deciduous woodland and coniferous plantations.

2. Planning Background

- 2.1 The local planning authority is Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC). Archaeological advice to the council is provided by the Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS).
- 2.2 A planning application was submitted to develop the site (Application No.: 99/00723/OUT). In accordance with *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16) issued by the Department of the Environment in 1990 (DoE, 1990) and the recommendations of BCAS, a condition for an archaeological watching brief was required.
- 2.3 The proposed scheme was for the construction of a new motorway service station, with associated car parking, access roads, services and landscaping across the site.
- 2.4 The first stage in the Archaeological Investigation was the production of a Desk Based Assessment (Gifford and Partners 1994, updated 1998).
- 2.5 Further to the results of the Desk Based Assessment an Archaeological Evaluation was recommended to inform on a suitable mitigation strategy and carried out by Oxford Archaeology Unit (OAU 2000) within the north and northwest parts of the site. This comprised geophysical survey, field-walking and shovel test pitting.
- 2.6 As a result of the evaluation, a system of mitigation was recommended consisting of a series of Watching Briefs. These were carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2008).

3. Geology & Topography

- 3.1 The British Geological Survey (1992) maps the solid geology of the area as Reading Clay beds and the drift geology as glacial sand and gravel.

4. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 4.1 The following information is summarized from An Archaeological Desk-based Appraisal of Land Adjacent to the M40 at Burtley Wood, Buckinghamshire (Gifford and Partners 1994, updated 1998).

Prehistoric

- 4.2 A Neolithic settlement has been identified at Stacey Bushes, consisting of several timber buildings set within woodland, while various flint tools have been found in the Colne Valley, 10km to the east of the site. A fragment of Neolithic axe and a struck flint have been found in a ploughed field to the west of the site.
- 4.3 The largest Iron Age hillfort in the country is located at Bulstrode Camp, 5km to the east of the site.

Romano-British

- 4.4 Settlement in the immediate vicinity of the site is unproven, however, kilns have been excavated at Hederley Village, 2km to the southeast. The northern area of the site is within the vicinity of a possible Roman road.

Medieval

- 4.5 The settlement of Beaconsfield is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey and does not appear to be a nucleated settlement until the first mention of a church in the thirteenth century. The village appears to have been a series of hamlets and manors as part of the Burnham Hundred which was held by Walter Fitz Otho and later his descendants, the Windsors. This was later passed to the de Burnham family and then to the Earl of Cornwall.
- 4.6 A Medieval moat is recorded as Scheduled Monument and located within Bower Wood, 500m south of the site. This is a rectangular internally banked site and located on a stream. It is thought to be a fishpond and water supply which may be associated with landscaping for a Medieval park to the south of Beaconsfield. However, size and location suggests it may have been the site of a hunting lodge associated with a deer park located to the south of Beaconsfield. (English Heritage Scheduling Description).

Post-medieval

- 4.7 The village of Hedgerley became a centre for brickmaking in the 17th and 18th centuries, ending before the outbreak of World War 2 when the brick kilns at Pennlands Farm ceased trading. Cartographic evidence from 1788 shows that the site was open woodland until the present day, with an area given over to arable land from at least 1825.

Previous Archaeological Work

- 4.8 Further to the results of the Desk Based Assessment, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology Unit (OAU 2000) within the north and northwest parts of the site, comprising geophysical survey, field-walking and shovel test pitting. No significant archaeological finds or features were recorded, with only a small amount of post-medieval pottery recovered.

5. Aims of the Investigation

5.1 The aims of the investigations were defined as being:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
- To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
- To enable the BCAS to make an informed decision on the status of the condition on the planning permission, and any possible requirement for further work in order to satisfy that condition.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation in order to inform the mitigation strategy as part of the planning process.

5.2 The specific objectives of the Investigations were to:

- Determine the presence of, and record, any deposits relating to Bower Wood scheduled medieval moat,
- Determine the presence of, and record, any deposits relating to the Roman road to the north.

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

6. Methodology

6.1 The archaeological programme of work comprised a series of watching briefs on all ground reduction works in areas specified by the WSI (AOC 2008) (Figure 3). The areas and works to be observed were:

- Ground reduction to the south
- Construction of new access road
- Construction of swale and drainage near to the Fish Pond Ancient Scheduled Monument

6.2 All machining during the evaluation was carried out using a 360° tracked excavator with a smooth bladed ditching bucket, under the constant supervision of the Archaeological Project Supervisor.

6.3 The accession number AYBCM:2008.139 was obtained for the project, and used for all fieldwork.

6.4 All recording was in accordance with the standards and requirements of the Museum of London's *Archaeological Field Manual* (MoL 3rd edition 1994).

6.5 All of the work was carried out in line with:

Archaeological Guidance Paper (AGP): 3, *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork*
(English Heritage June 1998)
IFA *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IFA October 1994)
IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. (IFA 1995, revised 2001).

- 6.6 A continuous unique numbering system was employed. For each area, a block of numbers in a continuous sequence was allocated.
- 6.7 Written descriptions, comprising both factual data and interpretative elements, were recorded on standardised sheets.

7. Results

Topsoil Stripping to the South



Plate 1: Topsoil strip looking west

- 7.1 An area to the south of the site and west of the Fish Pond Ancient Scheduled Monument (Figure 3) was stripped by machine and monitored.
- 7.2 The ground reduction revealed the natural geology (1003) 0.30m below ground level. This consisted of yellow-brown sandy clay gravel.
- 7.3 This was overlain by (1002), a 0.15m thick layer of subsoil consisting of mid brown silty clay with occasional sub-angular stone inclusions.
- 7.4 This was overlain by topsoil (1001), a 0.15m thick layer of organic silty clay which was heavily rooted.
- 7.5 The area had been heavily disturbed in several places by modern intrusions and groundworks.
- 7.6 No archaeological finds or features were present.

New Access Road



Plate 2: Ground Reduction Access Road



Plate 3: Sample Section 1

- 7.7 An area to the northeast of the site (Figure 3) was reduced during the construction of a new access road and monitored.
- 7.8 The ground reduction revealed the natural geology (2003) 0.25m below ground level. This consisted of a compact grey sandy clay gravel.
- 7.9 This was overlain by a layer of subsoil (2002) 0.10m thick; a mid brown silty clay with occasional small sub-rounded stones.
- 7.10 This was sealed by the topsoil (2001), a dark brown clay silt with frequent small sub-rounded stones 0.15m thick.
- 7.11 In several areas the topsoil and subsoil had been truncated and the natural ground directly overlain by a layer of made ground (2004), consisting of crushed concrete and brick.
- 7.12 No archaeological finds or features were present.

Swale and Drainage Construction



Plate 4: Drainage Excavation



Plate 5: Drainage Excavation

- 7.13 A drainage trench was cut along the eastern edge of the development area, with a turn to the east near to the Fish Pond Ancient Scheduled Monument. No archaeological finds or features were present.
- 7.14 The sequence of deposits along the drainage channel are described in the tables below. See figure 3 for section locations.



Plate 6: Section 2



Plate 7: Section 3

Sections 2 & 3, South Facing				
Context	Thickness	Extent	Description	Interpretation
3001	0.05m	30.00m x 1.00m	Mulch, leaves, branches in a matrix of dark grey brown clay silt.	Topsoil / Forest Floor
3002	0.25m	30.00m x 1.00m	Light brown yellow silty sand	Subsoil
3003	NFE	30.00m x 1.00m	Mid brown orange silty sand, moderate flint inclusions	Natural

Section 4, South Facing				
Context	Thickness	Extent	Description	Interpretation
3001	0.20m	30.00m x 1.00m	Mulch, leaves, branches in a matrix of light grey brown clay silt.	Topsoil / Forest Floor
3002	0.55m	30.00m x 1.00m	Light brown yellow silty sand with frequent rounded and sub-rounded river pebbles.	Subsoil
3003	NFE	30.00m x 1.00m	Mid brown orange silty sand, moderate flint inclusions	Natural



Plate 8: Sample Section 4



Plate 9: Sample Section 5

Section 5, South-West Facing				
Context	Thickness	Extent	Description	Interpretation
3004	0.20m	30.00m x 1.00m	Dark black grey clay sand silt	Alluvial material from nearby stream
3002	0.25m	30.00m x 1.00m	Light brown yellow silty sand	Subsoil
3003	NFE	30.00m x 1.00m	Mid brown orange silty sand, moderate flint inclusions	Natural

- 7.15 The excavation of the drain run revealed the natural geology (3003) at a depth of 0.30m – 0.75m below the current ground surface, which consisted of mid brown orange silty sand with moderate flint inclusions.
- 7.16 This was overlain by the subsoil (1002), a layer of light brown yellow silty sand between 0.25 and 0.55m thick.
- 7.17 The uppermost layer (1001) was a mixture of thin topsoil and the forest floor, which consisted of light grey brown clay silt with large quantities of mulch, leaves and branches between 0.05m and 0.20m thick.
- 7.18 At the eastern end of the drain run (section 5), the subsoil was directly overlain by (3004), a 0.20m thick layer of dark black grey clay sand silt deposited by the nearby stream (figure 3).
- 7.19 No archaeological finds or features were present.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 The specific aims of the watching brief were to determine the presence of deposits relating to Bower Wood scheduled medieval moat and the Roman road to the north.
- 8.2 The archaeological watching brief revealed no archaeological finds or features.
- 8.3 All groundworks within areas subject to the watching brief have now been completed and monitored. It is therefore recommended that no further work is required on this site to satisfy the condition on the planning application. However, the final decision will rest with Buckinghamshire County Council and its archaeology advisor, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS).
- 8.4 Publication of the results will be through the ADS OASIS form (Appendix B) with a short summary submitted to the appropriate local archaeological roundup 2008.

9. Bibliography

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Figure 1 Site Location

Figure 2 Detailed Site Location and Archaeological Watching Brief Areas

Figure 3 Swale / Drainage Area detail showing sample section location

Figure 4 Sample Sections

Appendices

Appendix A- Context Index

Context	Extent	Thickness	Description
1001	Area of Topsoil Strip	0.15m	Topsoil
1002	Area of Topsoil Strip	0.15m	Subsoil
1003	Area of Topsoil Strip	NFE	Natural
2001	Access Road Area	0.15m	Topsoil
2002	Access Road Area	0.10m	Subsoil
2003	Access Road Area	NFE	Natural
2004	Access Road Area	0.20m	Made Ground
3001	34.00 x 2.00m	0.20m	Topsoil
3002	34.00 x 2.00m	0.55m	Subsoil
3003	34.00 x 2.00m	NFE	Natural
3004	8.00 x 2.00m	0.20m	Alluvium

Appendix B – OASIS Form

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-49600

Project details

Project name	Motorway Service Area, Burtley Wood (Jnc2 M40)
Short description of the project	AOC Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at a proposed Motorway Service Area at Burtley Wood, Buckinghamshire on behalf of Giffords. The watching brief was required due to the developments' proximity to Bower Wood scheduled medieval moat. The watching brief revealed no archaeological finds or features.
Project dates	Start: 03-03-2008 End: 17-06-2008
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 1 - Minimal cultivation
Methods & techniques	'Visual Inspection'
Development type	Motorway Service Area and Access Road
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SOUTH BUCKS HEDGERLEY Motorway Service Area at Burtley Wood, Buckinghamshire

Study area 11.00 Hectares

Site coordinates SU 952 887 51.58862304 -0.625664805060 51 35 19 N 000 37 32 W Point

Project creators

Name of AOC Archaeology Group
Organisation

Project brief Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service
originator

Project design AOC Archaeology Group
originator

Project director/manager Andy Leonard

Project supervisor Catherine Edwards AOC Archaeology

Type of Developer
sponsor/funding
body

Name of Giffords
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?

Digital Archive Buckinghamshire County Museum
recipient

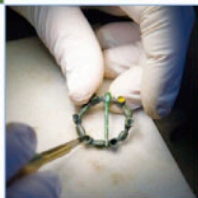
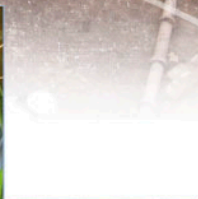
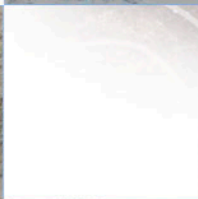
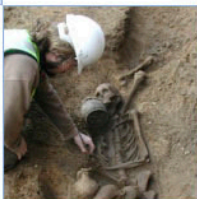
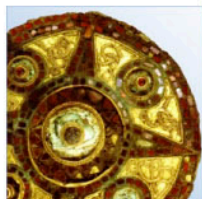
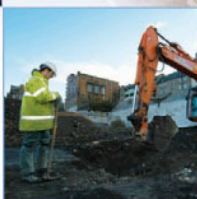
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available

Paper Archive Buckinghamshire County Museum
recipient

Paper Media 'Context sheet','Drawing','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'
available

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Motorway Service Area at Burtley Wood, Buckinghamshire: An Archaeological Watching Brief Report
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