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49 Preston Crowmarsh Oxfordshire

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation report



Accession Code: OXCMS: 2014.157 Planning Ref: P12/S0848/FUL / P12/S3418/FUL Ref: 104740.04 April 2015





Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation report

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Quality Assurance

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* I= Internal Draft; E= External Draft; F= Final

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Greencore Construction Ltd (the Client) to undertake an archaeological strip, map and record excavation on land at 49 Preston Crowmarsh, Oxfordshire, OX10 6SL. The fieldwork was undertaken on 25th and 26th March 2015.

The small area (approximately 160m²) was excavated prior to the erection of a detached dwelling with new vehicular access and associated parking and amenity space provision, and revealed a small number of archaeological features. Two large intercutting pits were recorded, although their function was not clear. Pottery recovered indicates that an earlier medieval pit was later truncated by a post-medieval feature. A third, much smaller, pit was also excavated and contained Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pottery.

No further archaeological works are recommended on the site.

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Greencore Construction Ltd, and particularly Mark Patten and Ian Pritchett for their help and assistance during the course of the works. Thanks are also due to Richard Oram (Planning Archaeologist, Oxfordshire County Council) who monitored the works on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

The fieldwork was carried out by John Powell assisted by Sean Rice. This report was written by Gareth Chaffey, who also managed the project on behalf of Wessex Archaeology. The finds were assessed by Lorraine Mepham and Lorrain Higbee and the report illustrations were drawn by Nancy Dixon.

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Greencore Construction Ltd (the Client) to undertake an archaeological strip, map and record excavation on land at 49 Preston Crowmarsh, Oxfordshire, OX10 6SL (hereafter 'the Site') centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 461555 190975 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 Planning permission (P12/S0848/FUL / P12/S3418/FUL) has been granted from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) for the erection of a detached dwelling with new vehicular access and associated parking and amenity space provision. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, the Planning Archaeologist of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) recommended that an archaeological condition (Condition 9) was attached to the planning permission. It stated that:

Prior to any demolition and the commencement of the development a professional archaeological organisation acceptable to the Local Planning Authority shall prepare an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation, relating to the application site area, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To secure the protection of and proper provision for any archaeological remains in accordance with Policy CSEN3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027 and Policies CON11, CON13 and CON14 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and to advice within the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 1.1.3 A Design Brief was prepared by Richard Oram Planning Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) detailing that an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks would be the most appropriate method of investigation to satisfy Condition 9. However following discussions with the Client it was agreed that a strip, map and record excavation would be undertaken as an alternative mitigation.
- 1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (WA 2015) for the strip, map and record excavation was prepared by WA and submitted to, and approved by, the Planning Archaeologist of OCC prior to any groundworks commencing. The strip, map and record excavation was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance: archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014a).
- 1.1.5 The fieldwork was undertaken on 25th and 26th March 2015.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site is located in the hamlet of Preston Crowmarsh *c*. 1.5km to the south of Benson, 1.5km north east of Wallingford and 8.5km east of Didcot. It is bounded to the south-west by an unnamed road (the main route which runs through the hamlet), to the north by a



hedgerow and to the south by an adjoining property. The Site lies some 140m to the north-east of the course of the River Thames and 800m to the west of RAF Benson.

1.2.2 The Site lies at approximately 47m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and the underlying geology is Valley Gravel (BGS 194, Sheet 254).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The Site lies within an area of some archaeological interest. Four burials were found in the 19th century approximately 100m south-west of this site while workmen were digging gravel, which were thought to be from the Roman period (PRN 2101). Two further burials were also found in the 19th century 200m north of this site (PRN 2100). Iron Age settlement evidence was recorded during the construction of No. 11 in 1978 (PRN 9896) whilst a quantity of pottery and a brooch was found in the spoil heaps created from the excavation of the footings. This site was located 210m north of the application site.
- 2.1.2 The site is also located 800m west of RAF Benson where a large number of archaeological features have been recorded from aerial photographs, including a Neolithic cursus, Bronze Age ring ditches and prehistoric enclosures (PRN 15385).

3 AIMS AND METHODS

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The aims of the strip, map and record excavation were:
 - to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and should remains be present, to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;
 - to confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
 - to determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
 - to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains;
 - to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present; and
 - to prepare a report on the results of the strip, map and record excavation.

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.2.1 The strip, map and record excavation, measuring *c*. 160m², was marked out on the ground prior to the commencement of work and located relative to the Ordnance Survey (OS) grid. Topsoil and overburden were removed using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Spoil was stockpiled at a safe distance from the edge of the Site.
- 3.2.2 The topsoil and modern overburden were removed in a series of level spits down to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon. All features were cleaned by hand where appropriate and planned prior to hand excavation. All pre-modern stratified deposits were excavated by hand. A representative section, not less than 1m in length, of all deposits through the stripped area from ground surface to top of the natural deposits was recorded.



- 3.2.3 A sample of each feature type was excavated and recorded, selected on the basis of their form, fill and stratigraphic relationship, and in order to ensure a broad characterisation.
- 3.2.4 The north-eastern corner of the Site was not excavated due to the location of a septic tank.

3.3 Recording

- 3.3.1 All exposed archaeological deposits were recorded using WA's *pro forma* recording system. A complete record of overlying deposits was compiled including sections, drawn to appropriate scales and with reference to OS Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels was calculated and plans/sections annotated with OD heights.
- 3.3.2 A full photographic record was maintained during the evaluation using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images will be subject to managed quality control and curation processes which will embed appropriate metadata within the image and ensure long term accessibility of the image set.
- 3.3.3 The survey was carried out with a Leica Viva series GNSS unit, using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.
- 3.3.1 A unique project code **104740** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records and finds. A unique accession code **OXCMS: 2014.157** was also used.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Natural deposits and soil sequences

4.1.1 The stratigraphy across the Site was uniform (**Plate 1**). The topsoil (101) was characterised by a very dark grey brown sandy loam, up to 0.30m in depth. The deposit, noted as being thicker on the eastern side of the Site, appeared to be formed of garden soils containing moderate gravel inclusions. This overlay subsoil (102), a dark brownish grey, sandy clay loam which contained common flint inclusions, was up to 0.22m in depth. Natural river gravels were reached across the entire Site at a depth of 0.52m below ground level (bgl).

4.2 Archaeological features

4.2.1 A small number of archaeological features were identified during the course of the works (**Figure 1**). All features contained datable material.

Medieval

4.2.2 Pit 108 (Plate 2) represented a substantial feature measuring 4m in length, 2.30m in width and 1.10m in depth. The feature contained five phases of infilling with the lowest fill showing an amount of concretion suggesting that standing water was present at its base for a substantial period of time. The remainder of the fills suggest a combination of natural infilling and deliberate backfilling episodes. The pit was likely to have been truncated by pit 104 on its southern edge, although this relationship was not clear during excavation. The pit was also truncated on its northern edge by a modern service.

Post-medieval

4.2.3 Pit **104** (**Plate 3**) was located in the centre of the Site. A quadrant of the large feature, which measured 4.7m in diameter and 0.38m in depth, was excavated. It was filled with a



single deliberate backfill deposit containing post-medieval finds including pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), clay tobacco pipes and animal bone. The nature of the fill may suggest that the feature had a function as a rubbish pit.

4.2.4 A small oval pit **106** (**Plate 4**), located on the eastern side of the Site, may represent a rubbish pit or a shrub throw. Measuring 1.36m in length, 0.95m in width and 0.30m in depth, the well-defined feature contained animal bone, pottery and burnt flint fragments within its single fill.

5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A small finds assemblage was recovered, deriving from the fills of three pits: pit **104** (fill 105), pit **106** (fill 107) and pit **108** (fill 112), and ranging in date from Anglo-Saxon to post-medieval.
- 5.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type and by context, and this information is summarised in **Table 1**.

Context	Animal Bone	CBM	Clay Pipe	Metal	Pottery	Other Finds
105	48/1569	23/5367	19/87	1 Cu	46/2847	1 glass; 1 shell
107	3/92				3/46	1 burnt flint
112				1 Fe	6/129	
TOTALS	51/1661	23/5367	19/87	1 Fe; 1 Cu	55/3022	

 Table 1: Table 1: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

CBM = ceramic building material; Cu = copper alloy; Fe = iron

5.2 Pottery

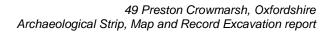
5.2.1 Of the 55 sherds recovered, one is Anglo-Saxon, seven are medieval, and the remainder post-medieval.

Anglo-Saxon

5.2.2 The single Anglo-Saxon sherd came from pit **106**, where it was a residual find alongside medieval and post-medieval sherds. This is a plain body sherd in a sandy fabric with sparse organic inclusions. It can be dated broadly as early to middle Anglo-Saxon (5th to 8th centuries).

Medieval

- 5.2.3 All six sherds from pit **108** are medieval, and all are in a similar sandy fabric, containing abundant rounded quartz. There are three rim sherds, all from jars; two of the rims are finger-impressed. This sandy ware falls into a widespread ware tradition across south Oxfordshire and the surrounding counties, but in this instance can be identified as either Wallingford ware (WA138) or Abingdon ware (OXAG) within the Oxfordshire type series (Mellor 1994). Wallingford ware has a date range of 11th to mid-13th century, while Abingdon ware has a similar start date but extended in use through most of the medieval period. These sherds are likely to have an 11th to 12th century date range.
- 5.2.4 One sherd from pit **106** is in a sandy fabric containing sparse flint inclusions, and can be identified as 'Kennet Valley' ware, also known as East Wiltshire ware (Mellor 1994, fabric OXAQ; Mepham 2000). This ware has a currency extending from at least the 11th century into the 13th century.



Post-medieval

5.2.5 All 46 sherds from pit **104**, and one sherd from pit **106**, are post-medieval. This group is dominated by coarse glazed redwares, including a few slipwares (trailed and marbled slipwares). Vessel forms present appear to be restricted to deep, convex bowls, at least one of which has horizontal looped side handles. These redwares do not lend themselves to particularly close dating, but the associated wares suggest a date range in the later 17th or early 18th century; these include tinglazed earthenwares (open forms), Staffordshire-type feathered slipware (platter), white salt glaze (small hemispherical bowl) and English stoneware (cylindrical tankard).

5.3 Ceramic Building Material

5.3.1 This category comprises fragments of roof tile, floor tile and brick. All fragments derived from the fill of pit **104**. The roof tile fragments (18 in total) are all from flat (peg) tiles, and are in a relatively hard-fired, evenly coloured, slightly sandy fabric of late medieval or early post-medieval type. There is one partial unglazed floor tile, in a coarse fabric with prominent clay pellets, and four brick fragments, all from unfrogged bricks in relatively coarse fabrics and in varying thicknesses, of a date no later than 18th century.

5.4 Clay Tobacco Pipes

- 5.4.1 All pipe fragments came from pit **104**. Most are plain stem fragments, but there are two stem/spur fragments, each with the maker's initials in relief on the spur: one is marked R/P and the other W/S. Both are dated on form as *c*. 1730-80 (Oswald 1975, fig. 3,G, type 12). The initials RP could belong to Richard Pickman of Henley, who took an apprentice in 1752 (Cannon 1988). The second maker has not been identified, although there was a Scotwell family in Henley (variously called Scolwell, Colwell, Scolnel and possibly Scaldwell) who are twice mentioned as pipemakers in the 18th century (ibid.).
- 5.4.2 There is also a bowl fragment, although this can only be dated broadly as 18th century or later.

5.5 Animal Bone

5.5.1 Most of the animal bone came from pit **104**, with three fragments from pit **106**. This small assemblage is dominated by cattle, with a small proportion of sheep, and a few pig bones. Body parts include both meat-bearing bones as well as primary butchery waste (heads and feet). Some bones show butchery marks, including a cattle sacrum which has been sawn, indicating the splitting of the carcass into two parts. Some bones show gnawing marks, indicating that they were accessible to scavengers, perhaps on a midden heap, prior to burial.

5.6 Other Finds

5.6.1 Other finds comprise very small quantities of metal (copper alloy wire, iron strip), glass (green wine bottle fragment, probably 18th century), shell (oyster) and burnt, unworked flint. Apart from the bottle glass, none of these finds are datable.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.



7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1.1 The strip, map and record excavation was successful in identifying a small number of archaeological features. Observations showed limited degrees of modern disturbance were noted during the excavation, namely a septic tank and associated modern service.
- 7.1.2 Three pits, all dating from the medieval and post-medieval period were recorded. All features contained datable material, with a single residual sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery also recovered. The functions of all three pits are not clear. The depth of medieval pit **108** suggests that it may have had a function as a watering hole that was subsequently infilled as it went out of use. Post-medieval pit **104** was shallow in comparison despite its large size. The feature may have acted as some form of rubbish pit. Small pit **106** may represent rubbish pit or a shrub throw.
- 7.1.3 No further archaeological work is recommended on the Site.

8 STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

8.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museum Service. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, under the accession code OXCMS: 2014.157. Deposition of any finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

8.2 **Preparation of archive**

- 8.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Oxfordshire Museum Service, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013). Details of the excavation will also be entered into the online "OASIS" database maintained by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS). A copy of the OASIS entry has been included in this report (**Appendix 1**).
- 8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:
 - 3 cardboard boxes of artefacts & ecofacts, ordered by material type
 - 1 files/document cases of paper records & A3/A4 graphics

8.3 Discard policy

- 8.3.1 WA follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Reference has also been made to the Oxfordshire Museums Service's *Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives* (2014), which allows for the discard of certain categories of material following recording to an appropriate level.
- 8.3.2 In this instance, selective discard of ceramic building material (all), clay tobacco pipe (plain stems), marine shell (single oyster shell), glass (single post-medieval bottle fragment) and metalwork (single undiagnostic items of iron and copper alloy) has taken place. The discard policy is fully documented in the project archive.



8.4 Security Copy

8.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

9 **REFERENCES**

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10 APPENDIX 1: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: wessexar1-208705

UASIS ID: Wessexal	1-200703
Project details	
Project name	49 Preston Crowmarsh, Oxfordshire
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Greencore Construction Ltd (the Client) to undertake an archaeological strip, map and record excavation on land at 49 Preston Crowmarsh, Oxfordshire, OX10 6SL. The fieldwork was undertaken on 25th and 26th March 2015. The small area (approximately 160m ²) was excavated prior to the erection of a detached dwelling with new vehicular access and associated parking and amenity space provision, and revealed a small number of archaeological features. Two large intercutting pits were recorded, although their function was not clear. Pottery recovered indicates that an earlier medieval pit was later truncated by a post-medieval feature. A third, much smaller, pit was also excavated and contained Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pottery. No further archaeological works are recommended on the site.
Project dates	Start: 25-03-2015 End: 26-03-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	104740 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	P12/S0848/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	OXCMS: 2014.157 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 3 - Disturbed
Monument type	PIT Medieval
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY PIPE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Early Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval

Π	49 Preston Crowmarsh, Oxfordshire Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation report
Investigation type	"Full excavation"
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country Site location	England OXFORDSHIRE SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE BENSON 49 Preston Crowmarsh
Postcode	OX10 6SL
Study area	160.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SU 461550 190973 50.9688970586 -1.34260985914 50 58 08 N 001 20 33 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 46.39m Max: 47.70m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Gareth Chaffey
Project supervisor	John Powell
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Greencore Construction Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Oxfordshire Museums Service
Physical Archive ID	104740
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Environmental"
Digital Archive recipient	Oxfordshire Museums Service
Digital Archive ID	104740
Digital Contents	"none"



Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Oxfordshire Museums Service
Paper Archive ID	104740
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Diary","Drawing","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Section","Survey "
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	49 Preston Crowmarsh, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Strip, Mpar and Record Excavation report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Chaffey, G
Other bibliographic details	104740.04
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Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
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Description	A4 illustrated client report
Entered by Entered on	Gareth Chaffey (g.chaffey@wessexarch.co.uk) 13 April 2015

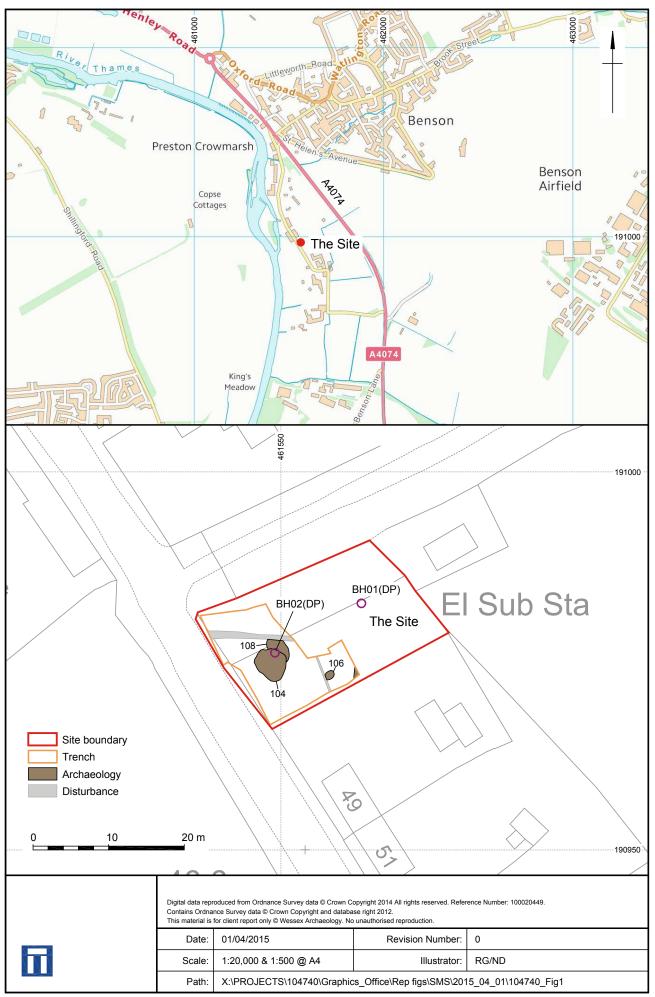




Plate 1: North facing representative section



Plate 2: West facing section of pit 108

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Plate 3: South facing section of pit 104



Plate 4: East facing section of pit 106

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