



Roxanna, Cadley Road, Collingbourne Ducis, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





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**ROXANA, CADLEY ROAD,
COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS,
WILTSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief
Report**

Prepared for:
REDACTED
Roxana
Cadley Road
Collingbourne Ducis

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Collingbourne Ducis,
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Plate 1 Site strip looking south-east

Plate 2 Site Strip looking east

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by REDACTED (The Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at the rear of Roxana, Cadley Road, Collingbourne Ducis, Wiltshire located at NGR 424735,154178 (hereafter 'the Site).

The watching brief was required as a condition of the planning permission granted to REDACTED by Kennet District Council (Planning Reference application E/09/0092/FUL), for the construction of a new dwelling at the rear of the property.

The watching brief was maintained during the mechanical stripping of the footprint of the new building and part of the proposed access road. Despite the proximity of the known early Saxon burial ground approximately 25m to the west, no features or artefacts of archaeological significance were present within the stripped area.

The watching brief was carried out on the 11th May 2009.

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by REDACTED (The Client) and would like to thank them for their cooperation in the successful completion of the project. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Vanessa Clarke, Assistant County Archaeologist, for her help and advice.

The archaeological watching brief was carried out by Steve Thompson and the report compiled by him. The illustrations were prepared by Liz James. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Nick Truckle.

Roxana, Cadley Road, Collingbourne Ducis, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by REDACTED (The Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at the rear of Roxana, Cadley Road, Collingbourne Ducis Wiltshire (hereafter 'the Site') during groundworks for the proposed construction of a new dwelling (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The work was carried out in order to satisfy a condition attached to planning application E/09/0092/FUL that required an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken in order that any archaeological remains that were present could be fully excavated and recorded.
- 1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2009) was prepared in advance of the watching brief. It set out in detail the methodologies and standards proposed by Wessex Archaeology to undertake the archaeological works. The watching brief and this report on the results will complete the required programme of archaeological work.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location, topography and geology.

- 2.1.1 The Site is located at NGR 424735,154178 and comprises a rectangular area of garden at the rear of Roxana which fronts onto Cadley Road. The Site is bounded to the north by open fields and to the east and west by the gardens of residential properties fronting onto Cadley Road.
- 2.1.2 The Site lies upon deposits of Upper Chalk of the Cretaceous Period which in places is heavily weathered and degraded with multiple periglacial stripes and areas of colluvium/hillwash deposits. The Site is approximately 140m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) on the northern slope of a dry valley c.350m to the east of the River Bourne.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 A chance discovery during the construction of the Saxon Rise housing development approximately 200m to the west of the Site in 1974 led to the discovery of burials dating to the early Saxon period (500-650AD).
- 3.1.2 A total of 33 graves were excavated cut to an average depth of 0.3m into the natural chalk (Gingell, 1978). Several contained objects buried with the

bodies, including knives, shield bosses and swords as well as items such as brooches, keys, buckles and beads pointing to a mixed community associated with a nearby settlement.

- 3.1.3 In 1999 an excavation undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services approximately 350 m to the south west of the Site revealed a settlement comprising ten sunken-featured buildings and associated features (Pine, 2001). Radio carbon dates suggest that most of the site is dated to the early eighth to tenth centuries AD, although one building was dated to the fifth to seventh century AD and is therefore contemporary with the cemetery.
- 3.1.4 Between 28th February 2007 and 31st May 2007 an archaeological excavation was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in advance of housing development on an area of land comprising c.0.53ha located at the rear of 106-108 Cadley Road, with the primary objective of identifying the extent of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery first recorded to the west of the Site in 1974, and to fully excavate and record all the burials and associated features present within the area of the proposed development.
- 3.1.5 A total of 78 graves, a minimum of four cremation burials, three urned and one unurned, cremated human bone from 23 contexts, two possible cenotaphs and a funerary enclosure date were revealed during the excavation (**Figure 2**). The majority of the burials were fairly well preserved and were cut into the natural chalk at a depth of between 0.25m – 0.5m below ground level.
- 3.1.6 Initial assessment of the grave goods suggests that the burials span the fifth to seventh centuries AD with the majority of the burials dating to the sixth century. The majority of the burials contained weapons and personal items that should enable a more closely dated chronology of the Site to be established. The importance of the Site is highlighted by the discovery of a bed burial, one of only fourteen ever recorded in the Country.
- 3.1.7 Together with the burials excavated in 1974, the Site represents the largest cemetery of this date ever excavated in Wiltshire. Although the county boasts a relatively high number of early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries spanning the later fifth to seventh century AD, few have been subject to modern excavation and analysis techniques and therefore because it was a modern investigation, carried out under controlled conditions, the assemblage recovered from the Site represents an important addition to our knowledge and understanding of Anglo-Saxon burial in the county.
- 3.1.8 As can be seen from Figure 2, burials were recorded close to the eastern boundary of the site and therefore it was thought possible that the cemetery would continue into the application Site

4 AIMS

4.1 Watching Brief

- 4.1.1 The aim of the watching brief was to provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains and to investigate and record these within the proposed footprint of the new building and access road.

5 METHOD

5.1 Fieldwork

- 5.1.1 The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of the removal of topsoil and underlying material to the top the natural geology, namely chalk and areas of coombe material and degraded chalk in an area measuring approximately 20m by 20m towards the northern limit of the back garden of Roxana (**Figure 1, Plates 1-2**).
- 5.1.2 A continuous archaeological presence was maintained during groundworks undertaken within the area of the watching brief until such time that it was apparent that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed had been exhausted. All excavated material was routinely inspected for artefacts.
- 5.1.3 A photographic record, which included high resolution digital images, was maintained.
- 5.1.4 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (revised 2008).

6 RESULTS

- 6.1.1 The strip saw the removal of c.0.30m of topsoil and turf which sealed a further 0.20m of degraded/weathered chalk which overlay solid clean chalk geology. The chalk was 'cut' by a series of north-east / south-west aligned periglacial stripes or solifluction channels. Towards the northern half of the stripped area the thickness of the degraded chalk sealing the solid clean chalk was only c.0.05m thick and it appeared that there had been some form of truncation across this area.
- 6.1.2 The chalk was for the most part very clean and cut by a number of modern tree throws relating to the recently removed orchard to the rear of the property (REDACTED pers comm), and a large circular cut for the foundations of an swimming pool (18ft in diameter).
- 6.1.3 A number of dirty patches of chalk were revealed and these were hand cleaned to find the extent of these possible features. A number of these were investigated by excavation and revealed to be shallow scoops within the chalk of natural origin.
- 6.1.4 To the south of the main strip for the footprint of the building, the removal of c.0.10m of material (topsoil) was undertaken adjacent to the western limit of the property for a new road to the rear of the property. As it was soon clear that this was not going to impact upon the underlying natural and therefore any burials which may exist, following discussions with the Wiltshire Council Archaeology Advisor it was deemed unnecessary to monitor this work further.

- 6.1.5 No burials or archaeology of importance was identified within the stripped area.

7 FINDS

- 7.1.1 No artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL

- 8.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present within the foundation trenches.

9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1.1 Despite the fact that the Site was only approximately 25m to the east of the known early Saxon burial ground, the watching brief did not identify any archaeological remains on the Site.

- 9.1.2 Although it appears that there may have been a limited amount of truncation of the area in the past, it is certain that if burials had been present then they would have survived as clear cuts within the chalk natural. Although it is tempting to suggest that the lack of burials indicates that the Site is beyond the eastern boundary of the cemetery, it is clear from the uneven distribution of the previously recorded burials (**Figure 2**) which show no discernable pattern, that this cannot be said with any certainty and therefore that the eastern extent of the burial ground is still unclear.

10 ARCHIVE

- 10.1.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990). It comprises a ring-bound file containing a site 'day book', photographic register and *Written Scheme of Investigation*. It is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building under the site code 71750, but will ultimately be deposited for permanent storage with the relevant local museum

11 REFERENCES

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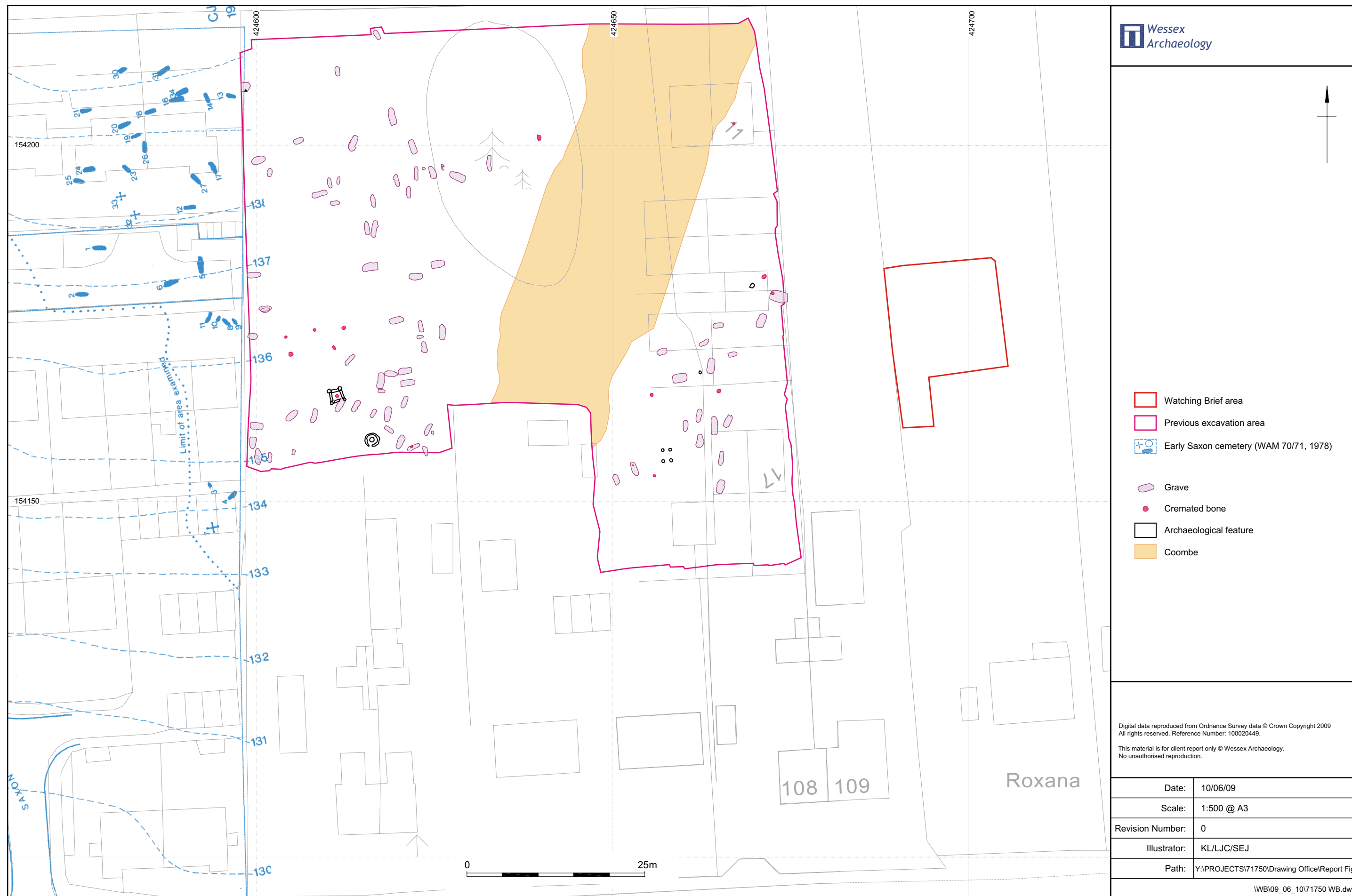
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Watching brief location plan

Figure 1



- Watching Brief area
- Previous excavation area
- + Early Saxon cemetery (WAM 70/71, 1978)
- Grave
- Cremated bone
- Archaeological feature
- Coombe

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The Site in location to previous archaeological investigations

Figure 2



Plate 1: Site strip looking south-east



Plate 2: Site strip looking east

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