Upper Horsehall Farm, Chisbury, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ref: 72531.03 April 2011



UPPER HORSEHALL HILL FARM, CHISBURY, WILTSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared for:
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April 2011



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QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE	72531	ACCESSION CODE	CLIENT CODE
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	E/10/0032/FUL &	NGR	426235 166770
	E/10/1060/FUL		

STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE	
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^{*} I= Internal Draft E= External Draft F= Final



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr and Mrs J Murray to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Upper Horsehall Hill Farm, Chisbury, comprising the construction of extensions and associated infrastructure to the pre-existing building, centred on NGR 426235 166770.

The works consisted of monitoring the groundworks and landscaping associated with the construction and record any archaeology that was encountered. The work aimed to identify the date, extent, character, and preservation of the underlying archaeological remains, in particular the possible remains of a medieval settlement located immediately to the south of the pre-existing building.

The fieldwork revealed a number of medieval and post-medieval ditches and discrete features located to the east of the pre-existing building. In addition four discrete features of unknown date were also indentified during the drainage ground works to the south-east. Three prehistoric worked flint flakes were also recovered but were residual. In summary, the archaeology of the site comprises land division ditches of medieval date which were used throughout the period and fell out of use when the existing building was constructed, thus changing the function of the surrounding landscape.

The fieldwork was carried out intermittently from the 15th of December 2010 to the 1st of April 2011.



Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Mr & Mrs J Murray (owners) and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to them in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Andy Nicholls of Ken Briggs Construction and John Bibby of Yiangou Architects LIP for their help and co-operation throughout the course of the works. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank the Wiltshire Council Archaeology team for their collaboration on this project.

The fieldwork was carried out intermittently by Rebecca Fitzpatrick, Jon Martin, Piotr Orczewski, Vasilis Tsamis, Phil Harding, and Matt Kendall. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Damian De Rosa. This report was compiled by Matt Kendall and edited by Caroline Budd. The specialist report was prepared by Lorraine Mepham (finds) and illustrations were compiled by Linda Coleman.



UPPER HORSEHALL HILL FARM, CHISBURY, WILTSHIRE

Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Project Background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr & Mrs J Murray (owners) to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Upper Horsehall Hill Farm, Chisbury, Wilts (hereafter 'the Site') centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 426235 166770 (see Figure 1)
- Planning consent (ref. E/10/0032/FUL and E/10/1060/FUL) was granted by 1.1.2 Wiltshire Council (WC) for the erection of an oak-framed outbuilding to provide ancillary accommodation, on a site to the north-east of the farmhouse.
- 1.1.3 The Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that "the proposed development area potentially lies within an area of archaeological interest. Immediately to the south, and bordering on the development site is a cropmark complex of a probable medieval settlement. It is likely that the proposed development will disturb or destroy archaeological remains associated with this area of known archaeology".
- 1.1.4 Due to the archaeological potential of the Site, it was required that an archaeological watching brief be carried out to monitor all landscaping and groundworks associated with the development, to ensure that the archaeological interest of the Site was properly safeguarded and recorded. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and approved by Wiltshire Council in advancement of the monitoring (WA 2010). This document laid out the methods and standards to be employed throughout the work.

1.2 Scope of Investigation

1.2.1 The area monitored during the watching brief and discussed in this report comprises the new access drive and forecourt, the new outbuilding, and the drainage works located to the south-east of the pre-existing building. The subsoil was mechanically reduced to the natural Clay with Flints on all areas.

1.3 Site location, topography and geology

- The Site lies to the north-west of the village of Chisbury; situated between 1.3.1 Marlborough and Hungerford. The property sits at a height of 160m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with land dropping quite steeply to the south-west and north-west, and more gently to the east.
- 1.3.2 The underlying geology of the Site is mapped as Clay with Flints, overlying Upper Chalk of the Cretaceous Period (British Geological Survey, 1:63,300 Sheet 267).



ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 2

2.1.1 The archaeological potential of the Site derives from its proximity to a cropmark complex suggestive of a medieval settlement, immediately to the south.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1.1 The principal 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 all archaeological features revealed during groundworks.

4 **METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1.1 The monitoring of the Site was undertaken by maintaining a presence during the groundwork associated with the redevelopment, notably the construction of the new outbuilding, the new access drive, and the trenches for the associated drainage of the new development. The groundwork was carried out under constant archaeological supervision using either a two or 14 ton 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. The mechanical excavation proceeded in spits to the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon or to the intended formation depth, which ever was encountered first. The machine excavated arisings were stored in a centralised location and were scanned for artefacts at regular intervals from both the topsoil and subsoil. Monitoring was not undertaken during the preparation of the area of the proposed walled garden as these works did not extend to a depth that would have impacted upon the underlying archaeological horizon.
- Archaeological features and deposits were subsequently hand cleaned and 4.1.2 sample excavated as per the methodology set out in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2010). Features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma record sheets and a unique numbering system for individual contexts, and were planned at a scale of 1:20. Sections were drawn at 1:10. All principal strata and features were related to the Ordnance Survey datum. The monitored areas were located using a Leica GPS survey system. Following all investigation and recording, the areas were then backfilled.
- A photographic record of the watching brief was maintained through digital 4.1.3 images. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and general context of the archaeological remains revealed, and the Site as a whole.

5 FIELDWORK RESULTS

5.1 **Deposit Sequence**

5.1.1 The majority of the Site was covered with a grey brown silty loam topsoil which was well rooted by vegetation and went to a depth of 0.25m below the existing ground surface. The topsoil overlay a 0.25m thick dark brown silty clay subsoil which contained occasional CBM fragments. Below this level the natural Clay with Flints appeared and continued to the maximum depth excavated.



5.2 **Archaeological Features**

- 5.2.1 Nine archaeological features were identified during the watching brief monitoring works (see Figure 1). A summary table of contexts is provided in Appendix 1.
- Two ditches were identified in the new forecourt area; [008] and [031] (see 5.2.2 Plate 1). Ditch [031], ran on a NE-SW alignment with a slight curve to the SE on the eastern edge of the access drive. Pottery sherds recovered from the ditch indicate a medieval date. Ditch [008] ran on the same alignment away from the pre-existing house in a NE direction for 8m before terminating. While no dating evidence was recovered from this feature, the proximity to [031] suggests that it is of the same period.
- 5.2.3 In the same area as the medieval ditches, two other features were also identified; [010] and [032]. Feature [010] was the burial of an immature pig. while there was no dating evidence for the skeleton, it is probably of postmedieval date. The location of this feature near to the pre-existing house is most likely coincidental and it was probably buried before the house was built. Ditch [032] was identified running across the drive and forecourt area on an N-S alignment and cut ditch [031] (see Figure 1). Pottery sherds recovered from the ditch give a late post-medieval date and may relate to the main building or the ancillary buildings which have now been demolished.
- 5.2.4 Away from the main building, five additional features were identified during the monitoring of drainage works; [020], [022], [024], [027], and [028]. Features [020], [022], [027], and [028] are linear features while [024] is a pit. Due to the nature of the drainage works only a small section of these features were exposed in plan and it is therefore difficult to determine the function and date of them. However, they do suggest a period of human activity on the site which, given the charcoal concentrations recorded in some of the deposits, may have been related to domestic activity.

6 **ARTEFACTS**

6.1 Introduction

A small quantity of finds was recovered during the watching brief, deriving 6.1.1 from five feature fills and a subsoil context; some unstratified finds were also collected. Quantities by material type are given in Appendix 2. The small assemblage includes material of prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval date.

6.2 **Prehistoric**

- Prehistoric finds comprise three worked flint flakes. These are not 6.2.1 chronologically distinctive, and a broad date range of Neolithic or Bronze Age is suggested. The flakes were clearly residual in later contexts. occurring alongside medieval pottery in subsoil [018] and ditch [031].
- Two pieces of burnt, unworked flint (from ditches 031 and 032) may also be 6.2.2 of prehistoric date; this material type is intrinsically undatable, but is often taken as an indicator of prehistoric activity however, in these ditch contexts it should be viewed as residual.



6.3 Medieval

- 6.3.1 Eleven of the 15 pottery sherds recovered are of medieval date. All are coarsewares, either flint-tempered or flint-/chalk-tempered. Both types are typical of the 'Kennet Valley' ceramic tradition, which has a distribution covering west Berkshire and north-east Wiltshire. The tradition has a lengthy currency, from at least the 11th through to the 14th century. There is one diagnostic sherd here, a jar rim; the sherds are most likely to date to the 12th or 13th centuries.
- 6.3.2 Medieval sherds provide the only dating evidence for ditch [031], and for subsoil 018.

6.4 Post-medieval

- 6.4.1 The remaining four sherds are post-medieval, and comprise three coarse redwares and part of a modern (19th/20th century) stoneware cylindrical preserve jar. These sherds came from ditch [032] while two were found unstratified.
- 6.4.2 The five pieces of glass recovered, all from ditch [032], are all postmedieval, deriving from green wine bottles of early post-medieval date. The fragments include a rim/neck and a base fragment, probably from an 'onion' form (c. 1680-1730), two base fragments which are probably from 'mallet' forms (c. 1730-60).

6.5 Undated

- 6.5.1 Animal burial [012] contained the partial skeleton of an immature pig (ribs. scapula, pelvis and long bones). The date is unknown but is most likely to be post-medieval.
- 6.5.2 Two further animal bones from ditch [031] include a cattle metapodial and a large mammal long bone.

7 **ENVIRONMENTAL**

7.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis waas demonstrated to be present within the monitored areas.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1.1 There is evidence of human activity on the Site from the medieval period through to the present day in the form of field or boundary ditches. Whilst these tie in with the possibility of a medieval settlement being located on the Site, the low level of features recorded does not provide evidence for the medieval settlement hypothesis. This lack of archaeology could be explained through general landscaping of the area when the main house was being built. This may have removed the bulk, and possibly all, of the remains of settlement.



9 ARCHIVE

9.1 Preparation and Deposition

9.1.1 The complete archaeological project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation (AAF 2007). Currently Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Devizes is not in a position to accept archives and therefore the archive will be held at Wessex Archaeology's offices until such time as this situation changes or an alternative depository is found. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the Museum's archive preparation standards.

9.2 The Archive

- 9.2.1 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 ringbound file containing a watching brief attendance form, site 'day book', trench record sheets, photographic register and *Written Scheme of Investigation*.
- 9.2.2 The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building under the site code **72531**.

9.3 Discard Policy

9.3.1 Given the small quantity of finds recovered, and their date range, retention for long-term curation is not recommended, and these finds will be discarded prior to archive deposition

9.4 Copyright

9.4.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

10 REFERENCES

Geological Survey of England and Wales 1971, Hungerford, Drift Geology. Sheet 267 1:63,360

Wessex Archaeology 2010, Upper Horsehall Hill Farm, Chisbury, Wilts, Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief, report ref. 72531.01, March 2010



APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLE

Context	Descripti	ion				
001	Layer	Topsoil				
002	Layer	Subsoil				
003	Layer	Natural				
	-					
004	Cut	Linear N-S aligned ditch running across the new drive and forecourt area. post-medieval in date.				
005	Fill	Fill of [004] . Mid greyish brown silty clay loam containing occasional flint gravel inclusions and post-medieval artefacts. Derived from natural infilling over a prolonged period.				
006	Cut	Linear NE-SW aligned ditch running across the new forecourt area. Medieval in date.				
007	Fill	Fill of [006] . Mid brownish grey clay loam containing rare flint gravel inclusions and artefacts. Derived from natural infilling.				
800	Cut	Linear NE-SW aligned ditch running from the house and terminating within the new forecourt area. Running alongside [006] and of unknown date, possibly medieval.				
009	Fill	Fill of [008] . Mid brownish grey clay loam containing rare flint gravel inclusions, burnt flint, and charcoal deposits. Derived from deliberate backfilling.				
010	Cut	Animal burial of post-medieval date.				
011	Fill	Mid brownish grey silty clay. Deliberate backfill of animal burial [010].				
012	Skeleton	Animal skeleton (immature pig).				
013	Cut	Linear N-S aligned ditch. Continuation of [004] and cuts an earlier ditch [015] . Post-Medieval in date.				
014	Fill	Fill of [013] . Dark greyish brown silty clay loam containing occasional flint gravel inclusions and post-medieval artefacts. Derived from natural infilling over a prolonged period.				
015	Cut	Linear E-W aligned ditch. Continuation of ditch [006] and of medieval date.				
016	Fill	Fill of [015] . Mid brownish grey clay loam containing rare flint gravel inclusions and artefacts. Derived from natural infilling.				
017	Layer	Topsoil from the drainage trenches.				
018	Layer	Subsoil from the drainage trenches.				
019	Fill	Fill of [020] . Dark greyish brown silty clay containing occasional chalk inclusions and charcoal flecks. Derived from natural infilling.				
020	Cut	N-S aligned gully seen in one of the drainage trenches. Possible drainage gully or beam slot. Unknown date.				
021	Fill	Fill of [022] . Dark grey silty clay containing rare chalk inclusions. Derived from deliberate backfilling.				
022	Cut	An unknown feature as it is only seen in the N section of the drainage trench but unlikely to be a natural feature. Unknown date.				
023	Fill	Fill of [024] . Very dark greyish brown silty clay containing charcoal inclusions. A couple of artefacts were recovered from the corresponding spoil heap but these may have been from (018)				
024	Cut	Circular pit located at the extreme eastern end of the drainage trench. Faint traces of it can also be seen on the western side of the septic tank pit. Unknown function and date.				
025	Fill	Fill of [027] . Greyish brown silty clay containing sparse rounded pebbles. Derived from natural infilling.				
026	Fill	Very dark grey silty clay containing large concentrations of charcoal. Primary fill of [027] and has been deposited from the western side of the feature.				
027	Cut	E-W aligned ditch seen in one of the drainage ditches. Runs parallel with the pre-existing house and possibly perpendicular to [020]. Mid brownish grey clay loam containing rare flint gravel inclusions and artefacts. Derived from natural infilling.				
028	Cut	Terminus of a possible gully located in one of the drainage ditches.				



		Unknown date and function.			
029	Fill	Fill of [028]. Light brownish grey silty clay containing abundant rounded			
		pebbles. Derived from natural infilling.			
030	Fill	Fill of [028]. Light greyish brown silty sandy clay containing no inclusions or			
		artefacts. Derived from low energy natural infilling.			
031	Group	Group number comprised of [006] and [015].			
032	Group	Group number comprised of [004] and [013].			

APPENDIX 2: ALL FINDS BY CONTEXT (NUMBER / WEIGHT IN GRAMMES)

Contout	Animal	Durant Elint	СВМ	Worked	Class	Dottow
Context	Bone	Burnt Flint	CDM	Flint	Glass	Pottery
005		1/18	2/375		3/96	3/80*
007	2/120					4/59
012	1/546					
014			1/73		2/183	1/5*
016		1/37		2/9		2/18
018				1/36		1/1
unstrat.						4/121*
TOTAL	3/666	2/55	3/448	3/45	5/279	15/284

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Project details

Project name Upper Horsehall Hill Farm

of the project

Short description Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Upper Horsehall Hill Farm, Chisbury, comprising the construction of extensions and associated infrastructure to the pre-existing building, centred on NGR 426235 166770. The works consisted of monitoring the groundworks and landscaping associated with the construction and record any archaeology that was encountered. The work aimed to identify the date, extent, character, and preservation of the underlying archaeological remains, in particular the possible remains of a medieval settlement located immediately to the south of the pre-existing building. The fieldwork revealed a number of medieval and post-medieval ditches and discrete features located to the east of the pre-existing building. In addition four discrete features of unknown date were also indentified during the drainage ground works to the south-east. Three prehistoric worked flint flakes were also recovered but were residual. In summary, the archaeology of the site comprises land division ditches of medieval date which were used throughout the period and fell out of use when the existing building was constructed, thus changing the function of the surrounding landscape. The fieldwork was carried out intermittently from the 15th of December 2010 to the 1st of April 2011.

Project dates Start: 15-12-2010 End: 01-04-2011

Previous/future

work

Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference

Current Land

codes

72531 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

use

Residential 1 - General Residential

CROPMARK COMPLEX Medieval Monument type

Significant Finds LITHIC WORKED FLAKES Bronze Age

Significant Finds POTTERY Medieval Significant Finds POTTERY Post Medieval

Significant Finds GLASS Post Medieval

Significant Finds ANIMAL BURIAL (PIG) Post Medieval

Significant Finds ANIMAL BONE Post Medieval

Investigation

type

'Watching Brief'

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location WILTSHIRE KENNET LITTLE BEDWYN Upper Horsehall Hill Farm

Postcode SN8 3HY

Study area 1.04 Hectares

Site coordinates SU 26235 66770 51.3988604198 -1.6228407778 51 23 55 N 001 37 22 W Point

Height OD /

Depth

Min: 158.00m Max: 160.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology

Project brief originator

Wessex Archaeology

Project design

originator

Wessex Archaeology

Project Caroline Budd

director/manager

Project

supervisor

Matt Kendall

Type of sponsor/funding

body

Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive No

Exists?

Physical Archive Wiltshire Heritage Museum

recipient

Digital Archive

recipient

Archaeological Data Service

Digital Contents

'Stratigraphic', 'Survey'

Digital Media available

'Images raster / digital photography', 'Text'

Paper Archive recipient

Wiltshire Heritage Museum

Paper Contents

'Stratigraphic','Survey'

Paper Media available

'Context sheet', 'Correspondence', 'Diary', 'Drawing', 'Microfilm', 'Notebook -Excavation', 'Research', 'General Notes', 'Plan', 'Section', 'Unpublished Text'

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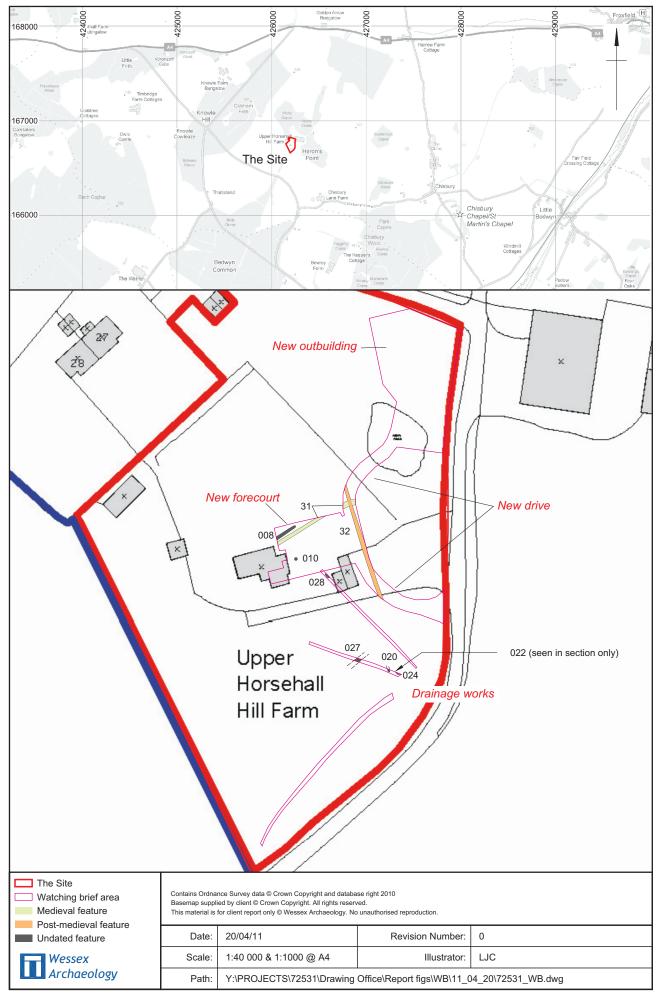
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Site location plan Figure 1



Plate 1: North-east facing section of linears 008 and 31



Plate 2 West facing view of linears 31 and 32 pre-excavation

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