Wessex Archaeology

Land Off Josephs Way, Shanklin, Isle Of Wight

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Ref:66870.03

September 2007

Land off Josephs Way
Shanklin, Isle of Wight

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Contents

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Pritchard Wilmott Partnership to undertake the work and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank them for their help and advice. Thanks are especially due to Sean Belson, of Pritchard Wilmott Partnership for providing survey data and for his assistance on site.

The Watching Brief was undertaken by Mike Trevarthen. This report was compiled by Phil Harding with the illustration prepared by Linda Coleman. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Caroline Budd.

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Pritchard Wilmott Partnership to undertake an archaeological watching brief of six geotechnical test pits on land off St. Joseph's Way, Shanklin, Isle of Wight.

The area was known from early mapping to have been subjected to quarrying but the extent and survival of possible archaeological deposits and features was unknown.

The results of the watching brief demonstrated that all six test pits were archaeologically sterile with ground having been disturbed by sand quarrying. All test pits were considered to have been back filled and landscaped subsequently and no natural sequences were noted within the depth of the test pits.

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Pritchard Wilmott Partnership to carry out an archaeological watching brief during excavation of geotechnical test pits on land, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 457530 81526 (**Figure 1**), off Josephs Way, Shanklin, Isle of Wight.

1.1.2 The watching brief was undertaken at the request of the County Planning Archaeologist to determine the presence/absence of archaeological features and deposits on the site. There are no confirmed development plans at present.

1.1.3 A formal Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared and approved by the Isle of Wight County Planning Archaeologist (CPA) which set out the methodologies and standards that will be employed by Wessex Archaeology during the watching brief.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The site, centred on NGR 457530 81526 (**Figure 1**), lay in the south-east of the Isle of Wight between Shanklin and Upper Hyde. It was bounded to the north and east by the residential gardens of Carter Avenue and Josephs Way/ Denny Avenue respectively, but the areas to the south and west comprised scrub land.

1.2.2 The site occupied land that rises steeply, due to an underlying sandstone outcrop, from approximately 55m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to approximately 62m aOD. To the south the incline rises more steeply to over 230 m aOD on St Martin's Down, approximately 1.5 km to the south, while to the north the gradient is more shallow falling into the Scotchells Brook, a tributary of the River Yar.

1.2.3 Natural deposits recorded near the site comprised typical argillic brown earth soils overlying solid geology of Cretaceous Lower Greensand and Speeton Clay (GSGB 1971).

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

1.3.1 A preliminary search for archaeological and historic sites within a 1km radius ('the Study Area') of the Site via the Archaeology Data Service (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk) indicated two Bronze Age sites including a flint working surface scatter. Other references relate to the historic usage of the area. No Scheduled Monuments were recorded within the boundaries of the Site itself.

2 AIMS

2.1.1 The aims of the watching brief as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2007) were to:

- Provide an adequate record of the extent, condition, function, status and date of any previously unknown archaeological remains prior to their destruction by the development.
- Place any remains within their chronological and regional context as well as to the local landscape.
- Recover any artefacts and collect appropriate Palaeo-environmental samples that would assist in the interpretation of the site.

2.1.2 A report of the findings and conclusions of the watching brief should be prepared and submitted to the Client and to The Isle of Wight Local Planning Authority Archaeologist (LPAA) at the completion of the work.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 The Site (**Figure 1**) covered approximately 1.3 ha within which six geotechnical trial holes, each approximately 3m long and 1 m wide, were excavated. Excavation was undertaken using a wheeled mechanical excavator fitted with a back-hoe and, due to the compacted nature of the soil, a toothed digging bucket.

3.1.2 All excavation was undertaken under constant surveillance by a suitably qualified archaeologist until such time that it was apparent that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed has been exhausted. Each test pit was monitored for any archaeological features that might be exposed in base or section. All spoil was routinely inspected for artefacts.

3.1.3 Due to the narrowness of each test pit and the depth to which they were excavated it was impossible to gain access to clean sections by hand. All assessments of sediment and written records were therefore compiled from the surface.

3.1.4 The terms of the Written Scheme of Investigation required that all exposed archaeological deposits and features be sampled by excavation and recorded accurately to a level that was sufficient to satisfy the aims of the watching brief. This necessitated that all features should be recorded in plan and section, located on a detailed site plan related to Ordnance Survey and described using Wessex Archaeology's standard *pro forma* recording system.

3.1.5 A systematic record of each test pit was also made using a digital format camera.

3.1.6 The watching brief was undertaken on 14th August 2007.

4 RESULTS

4.1.1 The test pits (**Figure 1; TH1-TH6**) were distributed at various locations across the site sufficient to provide a representative record of deposits within the area. Individual test pits were positioned to address specific questions.

4.1.2 Test Pit 3 was located in the base of a shallow linear feature to examine the possibility that it represented a former quarry track. Test Pit 5 was also located adjacent to the sandstone face of a former quarry specifically to establish whether the area was formed by made ground.

4.1.3 Test pits were dug to depths ranging from 2.60 m to 3 m. Test Pits 1 and 2 both encountered saturated unstable flowing sand between 1.80 m and 2.50 m below modern ground level.

4.1.4 Detailed descriptions of individual test pit logs are contained in **Appendix 1**. The broader site specific results of the watching brief demonstrated that the area was covered by a thin veneer of mid grey-brown sand, approximately 0.10 m thick, which supported poorly regenerated vegetation.

4.1.5 The underlying deposits in Test Pits 3 and 5 included layers containing brick rubble, concrete and plastic to approximately 1.80 m below ground level, thereby confirming that these areas were made-up ground. A steeply inclined band of sand in Test Pit 1 is also likely to represent backfilled quarrying. The remaining layers comprised a range of grey silts and sands, none of which were considered to be natural, with paler sand towards the base where compact sandstone became more common.

5 FINDS

5.1.1 No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were collected from within the test pits.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL

6.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present within the test pits.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 The excavation of the test pits represents only a very small sample of the area available. The depth of top soil, poorly developed vegetation, steeply inclined tip lines and made up ground recorded in the accompanying watching brief confirm the evidence of early mapping that large parts of the site have been quarried away. All archaeological remains are likely to have been destroyed; indeed no undisturbed geological sequences were noted in any of the test pits.

7.1.2 This evidence together with an absence of records documenting archaeological remains on the site and the absence of artefacts or archaeological features from the watching brief suggest that archaeological remains are likely to survive only at a low level or have been largely removed.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1.1 The archive comprises a ring-bound file containing a 'day-book' record the watching brief, a typed transcription of site descriptions of each test pit, original hand written trench logs, a record of attendance, test pit location maps, a risk assessment and a copy of the Written Scheme of Investigation. It is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office at Old Sarum under the project code 66870. In due course it will be deposited for long term storage with Isle of Wight Museum Services.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Wessex Archaeology, 2007, *Land off Josephs Way, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, Written Scheme of Investigation: Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished client report ref. 66870.01

10 APPENDIX 1- TEST PIT SUMMARIES

Test Pit 1		Digital photos 2464-2467
Context	Description	Depth
101	Weak regenerated humic topsoil and vegetation Mid grey brown silty sand.	0-0.05
102	Mixed lenses of mid and mid light silty sands with a notable inclined tip/band of pale yellow sand. In places some white sand lenses	0.05-1.60
103	Mid-pale orange brown silty sand.	1.60-2.30
104	Pale, then mid grey silty sand, harder towards base. Water seepage and flowing sand at 2.50 m. Base of pit 3 m.	2.30-3.00

Test Pit 2		Digital photos 2477-2479
Context	Description	Depth
201	Weak regenerated humic mid grey brown silty sand topsoil, 0.10 m thick, over 0.10 m of hard core, possibly a track.	0-0.20
202	Banded pale yellow brown silty sand	0.20-0.80
203	Pale grey silty sand darker at depth. Water and flowing sand at 1.80m. Base of pit 2.80 m.	0.80-2.80

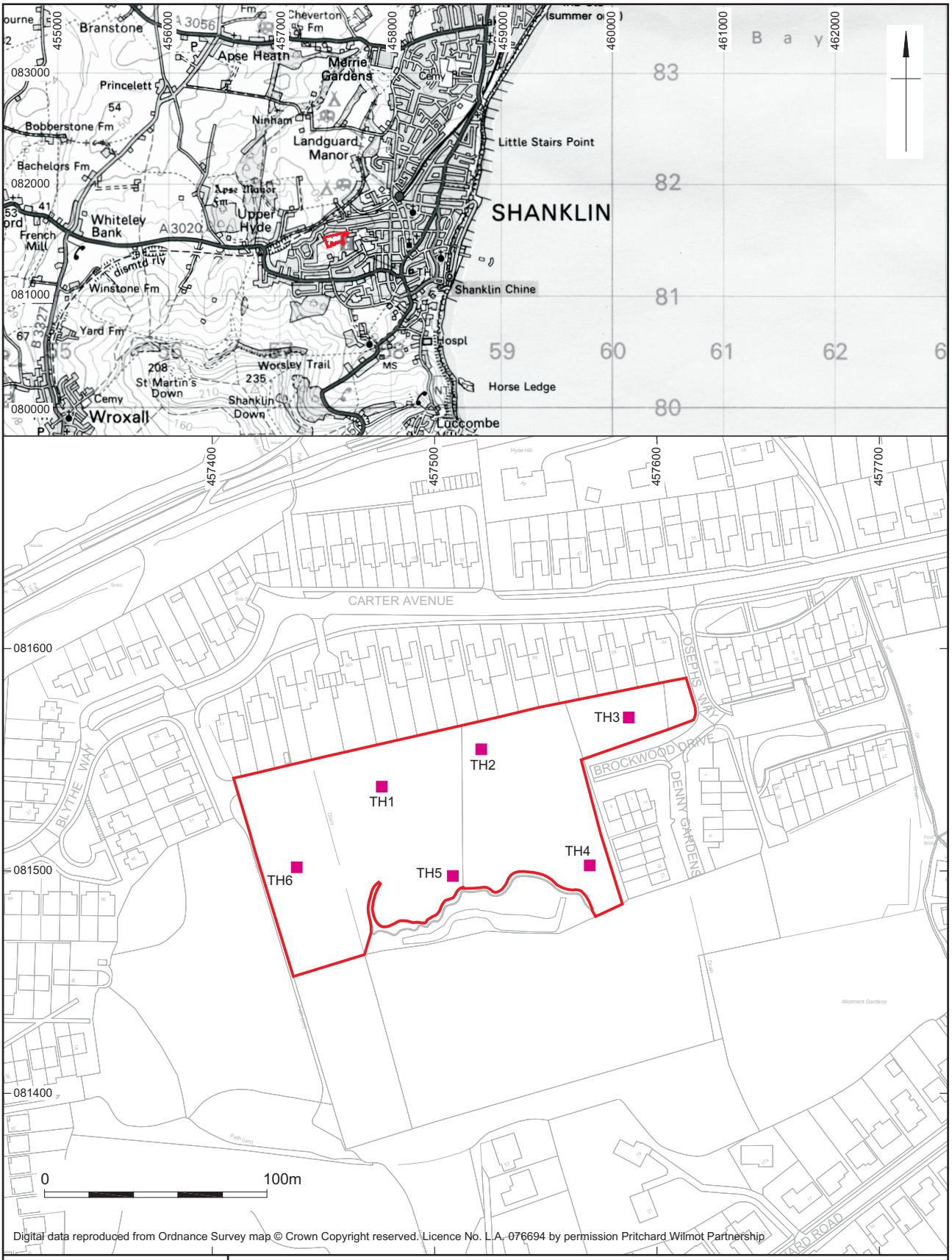
Test Pit 3		Digital photos 2484-2486
Context	Description	Depth
301	Weak regenerated humic topsoil and turf. Mid grey brown stone free silty sand.	0-0.10
302	Lenses of mixed pale and dark brown sand and silty sand with bricks. Redeposited material	0.10-1.60
303	Pale orange brown silty sand with layers and lenses of dark grey sandy clay. Base of trench 2.70 m.	1.60+

Test Pit 4		Digital photos 2487-2489
Context	Description	Depth
401	Weak regenerated humic mid grey brown silty sand topsoil and turf	0-0.10
402	Mid-dark yellow brown and grey brown clay silt, mixed with silty sand.	0.10-2.20
403	Pale yellow silty sand becoming harder at depth. Some pale yellow-white sand, some darker clay lenses. Base of pit 3.0m	2.20-3.00

Test Pit 5		Digital photos 2502-2506
501	Weak regenerated humic mid grey brown silty sand topsoil and turf	0-0.10
502	Mid brown redeposited silty sand. Homogeneous with	0.10-

	brick, concrete, plastic etc. Made ground.	2.00
503	Pale grey silty sand with dark grey sandy clay. Over pale orange silty sand and harder sandstone. Base of pit 2.60 m	2.00-2.60+

Test Pit 6	Digital photos 2510-2512	
601	Pasture soil. Mid grey brown humic silty sand, grading to.	0-0.15
602	Mid yellow brown silty sand	0.15-0.90
603	Pale yellow brown silty sand	0.90-1.10
604	Pale orange sandy clay, becoming sand dominated below 3m. Base of pit 3.70 m	1.10+



Site outline

Geotechnical test pits

Date:	07/08/31	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:50 000 & 1:2500 @ A4	Illustrator:	LJC
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\66870\Drawing Office\Report Figures\WSI\07_08_31\66870wb.dwg		

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Site location plan

Figure 1

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