

**MAGNOLIA,  
OLD SHAW LANE,  
SWINDON,  
WILTSHIRE.**

**NGR: SU 117 854 (centred)**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

Report No. 1091  
November 2015



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES**



**MAGNOLIA,  
OLD SHAW LANE,  
SWINDON,  
WILTSHIRE**

**NGR: SU 117 854 (centred)**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



**November 2015**

**Report No. 1091**

**Quality Assurance**

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with AMS's Quality Procedures (BS EN ISO 9001: 2008)

Author: Tracy Michaels BSc ACIfA.

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015.

Approved: Roy King BA MIfA

QA Checked: Diana King BA MCIfA

*This report has been compiled with all reasonable skill care and attention to detail within the terms of the project as specified by the client and within the general terms and conditions of Archaeological Management Services Ltd trading as Foundations Archaeology but no explicit warranty is provided for information and opinions stated. AMS Ltd accepts no responsibility whatsoever to third parties to whom this report or any part thereof is made known. Any such party relies on this report at their own risk. Copyright of this document is retained by AMS Ltd, but unlimited licence to reproduce it in whole or part is granted to the client and/or their agents and/or assignees on payment of invoice.*

## CONTENTS

Summary

Glossary

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND
- 3 AIMS
- 4 METHODOLOGY
- 5 RESULTS
- 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS
- 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY
- 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Watched Areas

Figure 3: Plan Showing Evaluation and Watching Brief Results

## **SUMMARY**

Between June 2014 and September 2015, Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief at Magnolia, Old Shaw Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 117 854 (centred)) (Figures 1 and 2) in relation to a new residential development to the rear of Magnolia, along with related groundworks.

The watched areas to the south and east of the site did not contain any intact subsoils and appear to have been previously stripped down to the natural clays.

A single small unstratified sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the topsoil during the excavation of footings for dwelling 1.

The only feature present within the watched areas was a single Modern pit present within the northwestern footing of dwelling 3, which contained Modern glass.

The previous evaluation revealed three probable undated archaeological features (Figure 3). No further evidence for these features was present within the watched areas.

No archaeological features were identified during the course of this watching brief and, with the exception of a single small abraded sherd of Roman pottery, present within the topsoil, no other finds were recovered that pre-dated the Modern period.

## GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### *Archaeology*

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the Modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set for the Modern period, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### *CBM*

Ceramic building material.

### *DMV*

Deserted Medieval Village

### *LOE*

Limit of excavation

### *Medieval*

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *c.* AD 1500.

### *Natural*

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

### *NGR*

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### *OD*

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey.

### *Post-medieval*

The period from *c.* AD 1500 onwards.

### *Prehistoric*

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43. Traditionally sub divided into; Palaeolithic – *c.* 500,000 BC to *c.* 12,000 BC; Mesolithic – *c.* 12,000 BC to *c.* 4,500 BC; Neolithic – *c.* 4,500 BC to *c.* 2,000 BC; Bronze Age – *c.* 2,000 BC to *c.* 800 BC; Iron Age – *c.* 800 BC to AD 43.

### *Romano-British*

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *c.* AD 410.

### *Saxon*

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between June 2014 and September 2015, Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief at Magnolia, Old Shaw Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 117 854 (centred)) (Figures 1 and 2) in relation to a new residential development to the rear of Magnolia, along with related groundworks.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2014). The WSI conformed to the principles of NPPF12 (*National Planning Policy Framework 2012*), the standard brief issued by Wiltshire Council, the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (rev. 2008) and *Standards for Field Evaluation and Assessment in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief and it complies with the specification set out in MoRPHE (English Heritage, 2006).

## 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission was been granted for a new residential development at the site by Swindon Borough Council in 2006 under reference S/06/0631. The permission included a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief during the relevant groundworks. In 2011 the approval period was extended under planning reference S/TIME/0356/RM.
- 2.2 The base geology consisted of Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation from the Jurassic (BGS Online Viewer).
- 2.3 Excavation in the early 1980s at nearby Shaw Farm revealed a small concentration of Medieval dwellings. Further survey and excavation of land to the northeast of the site also revealed Medieval activity in the form of a ruined limestone structure and Late Medieval pottery sherds. An archaeological evaluation of land at 17 Packington Close, almost immediately to the west of the site also revealed sherds of Medieval pottery. Multiple isolated findspots of Medieval and Romano-British pottery have also been recorded in the area of Shaw.
- 2.4 On 28th and 29th April 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation at the site. Despite surface flooding, the evaluation identified three possible archaeological features, two of which could not be excavated due to surface flooding. A probable pit [103] was excavated but, due to a paucity of artefacts, could not be dated. A single sherd of probable Roman greyware pottery was recovered from the spoil in one trench but, as it was unstratified, it could not be used to date any of the features observed.

- 2.5 The archaeological potential of the site may therefore be perceived as moderate-high for deposits and features of Roman and Medieval date. This did not prejudice the watching brief against the recovery of finds or features relating to other periods.

### **3 AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for the management of the resource, including further archaeological works if they proved necessary. This allowed reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the development.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
  - ii) to attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present on the site;
  - iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which attempted to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;
  - iv) to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The western footing for the garage for Magnolia was excavated in June 2014, with main construction works commencing in April 2015.
- 4.2 The areas for the new dwellings, garages and driveway were initially topsoil stripped, followed by the excavation of the footing trenches. These groundworks were undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a toothless grading bucket, under the constant direction of the attending archaeologist.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

## 5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The natural substrates of orange/grey clay with flint nodules was encountered in all areas excavated at an average depth of 0.3 to 0.8m (108.80m AOD) below the Modern ground surface.
- 5.2 A mid-brown silty clay subsoil sealed the natural clay substrates. This was present for a maximum depth of 0.47m, but was only present in the northern side of the site. The subsoil was present in the footings for dwellings and garage in plots 2 and 3.
- 5.3 A dark brown silty clay topsoil with a maximum depth of 0.35m sealed the natural deposits in the remainder of the monitored areas.
- 5.4 A single cut feature was identified within the watched area, in the form of a Modern pit present within the northwestern footing of dwelling 3. The pit had a flat base and vertical sides and measured 1m in diameter and 0.35m deep. The feature cut through the subsoil and contained a dark grey black clay silt humic fill, which yielded Modern glass. This material was not retained.
- 5.5 No archaeological features were present within the watched areas and archaeological material recovered consisted only of a single small abraded sherd of probable Roman pottery, which was recovered from the topsoil during the excavation of the footings to dwelling 1.

## 6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The watched areas to the south and east of the site did not contain any intact subsoils and appear to have been previously stripped down to the natural clays.
- 6.2 A single small unstratified sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the topsoil during the excavation of dwelling 1.
- 6.3 The only feature present within the watched areas was a single Modern pit present within the northwestern footing of dwelling 3, which contained Modern glass.
- 6.4 The previous evaluation revealed three probable undated archaeological features (Figure 3). No further evidence for these features was present within the watched areas.
  - 6.4.1 Probable pit [103] did not fall within any of the excavated footings for dwelling 2. The two probable features present in Trench 2 were not visible during the topsoil strip for the road, however, as these features were sealed by the subsoil in the evaluation the present works would not have excavated deep enough to reveal them. There was no evidence for the continuation of probable linear [203] in any of the garage footings excavated to the north of Trench 2.



- 6.5 No archaeological features were identified during the course of this watching brief and, with the exception of a single small abraded sherd of Roman pottery present within the topsoil, no finds were recovered that pre-dated the Modern period.
- 6.6 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited with the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery once suitable storage space becomes available. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 2008. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2012. *National Planning Policy Framework*.

English Heritage. 2006. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*.

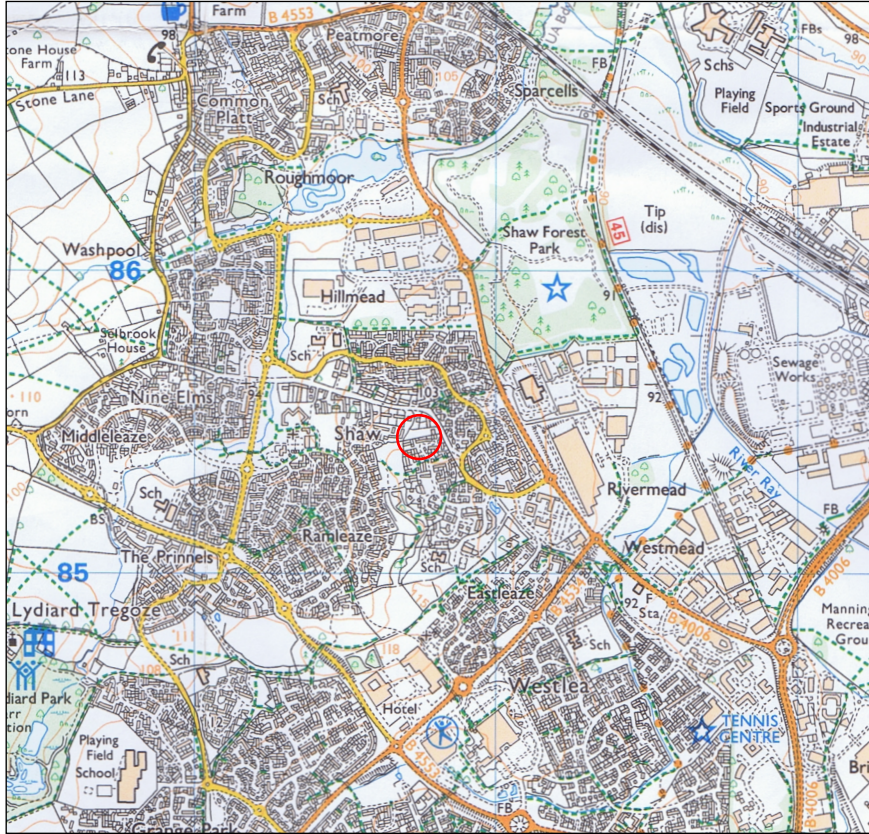
Foundations Archaeology, 2014. *Archaeological Evaluation at Magnolia, Old Shaw Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire*

Foundations Archaeology, 2014. *Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Watching Brief at Magnolia, Old Shaw Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire*

Wiltshire Council (1995) *Standards for Field Evaluation and Assessment in Wiltshire*

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

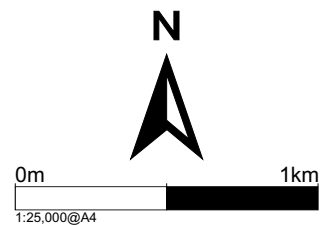
Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Wiltshire Council, Stuart Morgan and the groundworkers for their assistance during the course of this project.



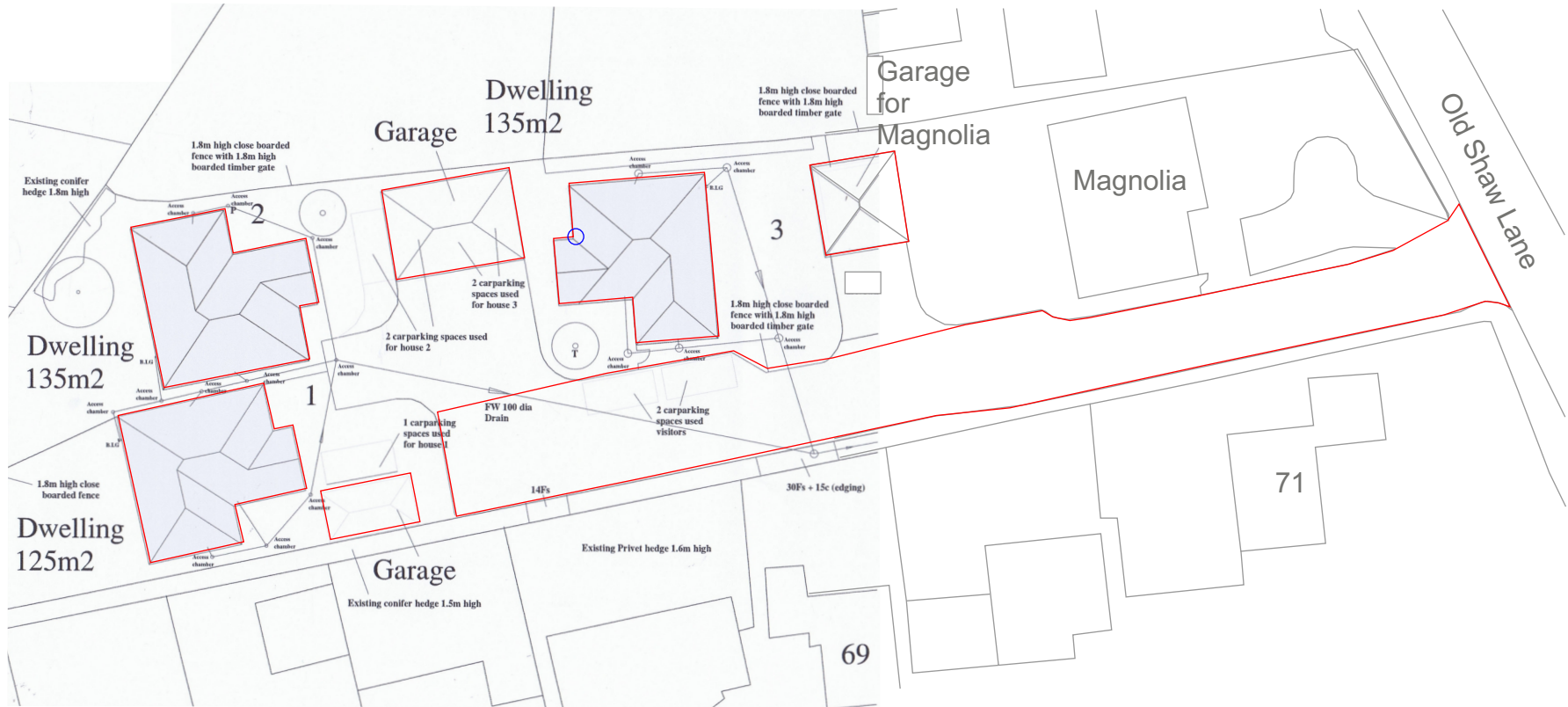
© Crown Copyright  
Reproduced under licence 100015722

**Site Code: OSL14**

**Accession Code:**





**FIGURE 1: Site Location**




Site Code: OSL14  
 Accession Code:

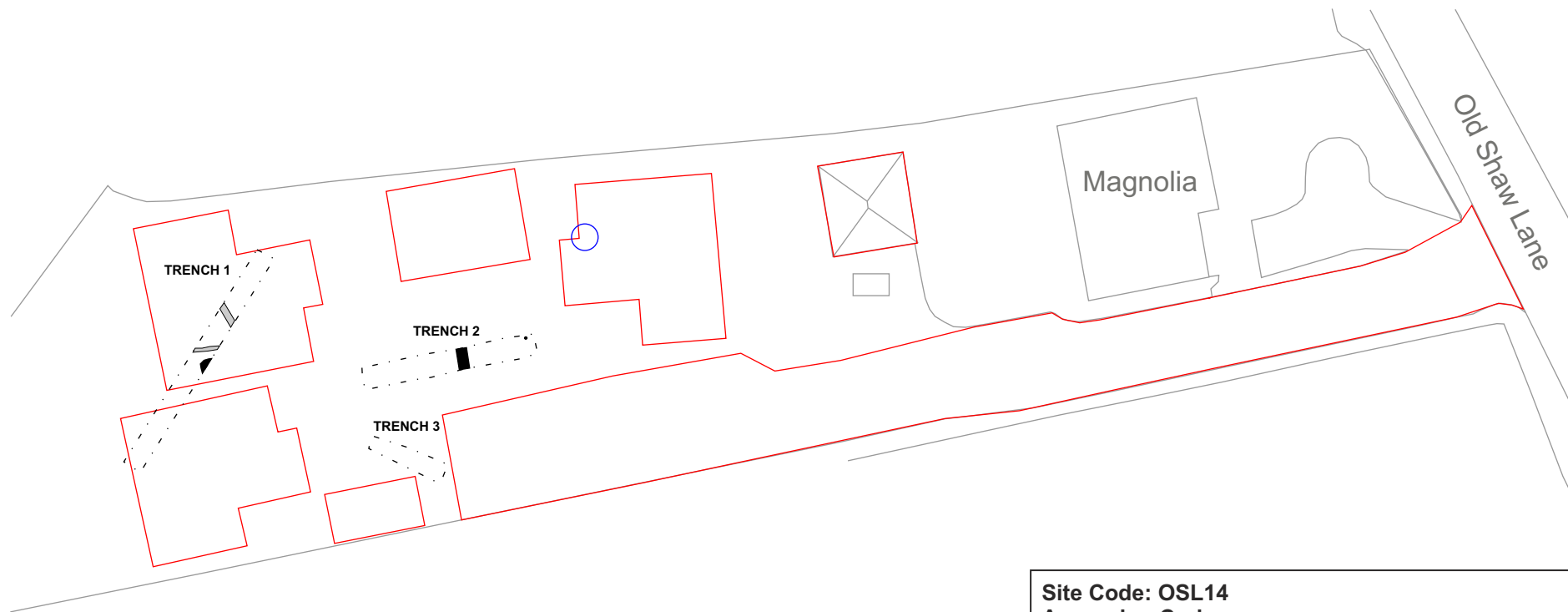
N






 AREAS OF WATCHING BRIEF  
 LOCATION OF MODERN PIT

  
 0m 20m  
 1:500

**FIGURE 2: Watched Areas**



**Site Code: OSL14**  
**Accession Code:**

-  PROBABLE ARCHAEOLOGY IDENTIFIED IN EVALUATION
-  MODERN DRAINAGE IDENTIFIED IN EVALUATION
-  LOCATION OF MODERN PIT IDENTIFIED IN WATCHING BRIEF

**N**

0m 20m

1:500@A4

**FIGURE 3: Plan Showing Evaluation and Watching Brief Results**