

**LAND AT LATHAM ROAD,
BLUNSDON,
SWINDON,
WILTSHIRE.**

NGR: 414991.189567

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

July 2015
Report No. 1065



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

On 30th June 2015 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Latham Road, Blunsdon, Swindon, Wiltshire (NGR: 414991.189567). The project was commissioned by Shane McNulty of Greene King plc.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of five trenches within the area of a proposed restaurant/public house.

The archaeological works identified a relatively small area of undisturbed natural clay deposits at the eastern edge of the investigation area, whilst the majority of the investigation area had been significantly truncated by landscaping works associated with the construction of an adjacent former factory.

No archaeological features, finds or deposits were present within any of the evaluation trenches. In light of this and combined with the evidence for significant truncation, the archaeological potential within the footprint of the restaurant/public house is considered negligible-low.

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, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between AD 1066 and 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. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period between AD 1500 and AD 1900.

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.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology on 30th June 2015 on land at Latham Road, Blunsdon, Swindon, Wiltshire (NGR: 414991.189567). The project was commissioned by Shane McNulty of Greene King plc.
- 1.2 The project related to an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2015) and was conducted in accordance with CIfA *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (2014) as well as *Standards for Field Evaluation and Assessment in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995).
- 1.3 The code of conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission (**S/14/0233**) has been granted for the erection of a restaurant/public house with first floor staff accommodation, access, car parking and associated works, including re-profiling of soil levels.
- 2.2 The site is located at the north of Swindon, to southwest of the A419 and to the east of the former Motorola factory, which is now partly occupied by Vygon UK. At the time of the fieldwork the site comprised uneven waste ground, which was laid to grass and weeds. The underlying geology is recorded as *Amphill Clay Formation* – mudstone and *Stanford Formation* – limestone (BGS – online viewer).
- 2.3 An archaeological desk-based assessment (Foundations, 2014) has highlighted that the site was of low-moderate archaeological potential for the recovery of Prehistoric and Roman finds, and of low potential for remains from the Saxon through to the Modern period. The presence of Prehistoric occupation or Roman roadside activity was not expected; the foci of settlement and occupation in the area appear moderately well-defined, but the potential remained for further activity of these periods.
- 2.4 The site therefore contained the potential for archaeological features and deposits, predominately relating to the Prehistoric and Roman periods.
- 2.5 In light of the archaeological potential, a requirement for an archaeological strip, map and sample, targeted on the location of the proposed restaurant/public house, was attached to the planning permission.
- 2.6 Subsequent to the approval of the strip, map and sample WSI and after discussion with the Wiltshire County Council Planning Archaeologist, it was agreed that a suitable trench evaluation would help to further characterise the

archaeological potential of the site and, therefore, potentially indicate whether the strip, map and sample works would be necessary.

- 2.7 It was agreed that five trenches were to be excavated within the footprint of the restaurant/public house, as shown in Figure 2.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation 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. This would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed 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 will attempt 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;
 - v) to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 Five evaluation trenches were excavated within the site, as shown in Figure 2. The trenches were located in order to provide a representative sample of the investigation area. The trenches, as excavated, represented an approximate 5% sample of the footprint of the restaurant/public house.
- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of archaeological remains or the underlying natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Spoil tips were visually scanned for finds.

- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the general sampling schemes and standards set out in the strip, map and sample WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1.1 **Trench 1** was excavated onto natural yellow-brown plastic clay at a depth of 0.36m (141.72m OD) below Modern ground. The natural clay was overlaid by a dark brown clay silt topsoil, up to 0.36m thick, which contained frequent Modern detritus.
- 5.1.2 Feature [102], which measured 3m long by 0.60m wide, cut the natural clay, was aligned north-south and clearly represented the eastern edge of a substantial extant slope, present immediately to the west of the trench, which formed part of Modern landscaping associated with the construction of the former Motorola factory. The feature contained fill (103), which consisted of a brown clay sand silt with frequent small fragments of limestone. This fill was recorded in plan only.
- 5.1.3 No archaeological features, finds or deposits were present within the trench.
- 5.2.1 **Trench 2** was excavated onto natural yellow-brown plastic clay at a depth of 0.28m (141.73m OD) below Modern ground. The natural clay was cut by a former agricultural land drain and was overlaid by a dark brown clay silt topsoil (201), up to 0.28m thick. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within the trench.
- 5.3.1 **Trench 3** was excavated onto natural yellow-brown plastic clay at a depth of 0.37m (141.76m OD) below Modern ground. The natural clay was cut by a former agricultural land drain, which was equivalent to the land drain within Trench 2 and was overlaid by a dark brown clay silt topsoil (301), up to 0.37m thick.
- 5.3.2 Feature [302], which measured 1.9m long by 1.1m wide was equivalent to feature [102] and represented the eastern edge of landscaping associated with the former Motorola factory. The feature contained fill (303), which comprised a plastic grey clay. This was recorded in plan only.
- 5.3.3 No archaeological features, finds or deposits were present within the trench.
- 5.4.1 **Trench 4** was excavated onto natural solid grey-beige clay and limestone at a depth of 0.52m (139.44m OD) below Modern ground. The natural deposits were overlaid by a layer of brown plastic clay (402), up to 0.25m thick, which contained occasional fragments of Modern ceramic drain pipe. This was, in turn, overlaid by a dark brown clay silt topsoil (401), up to 0.27m thick. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within the trench.

- 5.5.1 **Trench 5** was excavated into natural solid grey-beige clay and limestone, the top of which was present at 0.41m (139.62m OD) below Modern ground. The natural substrate was directly sealed by a layer of geo-technical membrane (503), which was, in turn, overlaid by a layer of very compact beige crushed limestone (502), up to 0.16m thick. The crushed limestone was sealed by a dark brown clay silt topsoil (501), up to 0.25m thick. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within the trench.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The evaluation identified a relatively small area of undisturbed natural clay deposits at the eastern edge of the investigation area, at the location of Trenches 1, 2 and 3. The presence of an agricultural ceramic land drain, present within Trenches 2 and 3, indicated that this area had previously been agricultural fields.
- 6.2 The relative height levels in Trenches 4 and 5 indicated that landscaping works associated with the construction of the former Motorola factory had reduced the level of the natural deposits across most of the investigation area by up to 2.3m.
- 6.3 No archaeological features, finds or deposits were present within any of the evaluation trenches. In light of this and combined with the evidence for significant truncation of natural deposits, the archaeological potential within the footprint of the restaurant/public house is considered negligible-low.
- 6.4 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited in due course with Swindon Museum. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

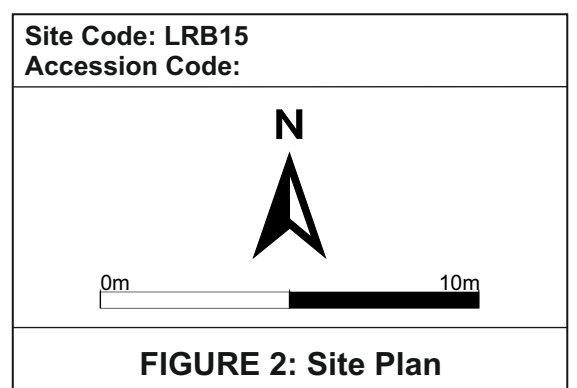
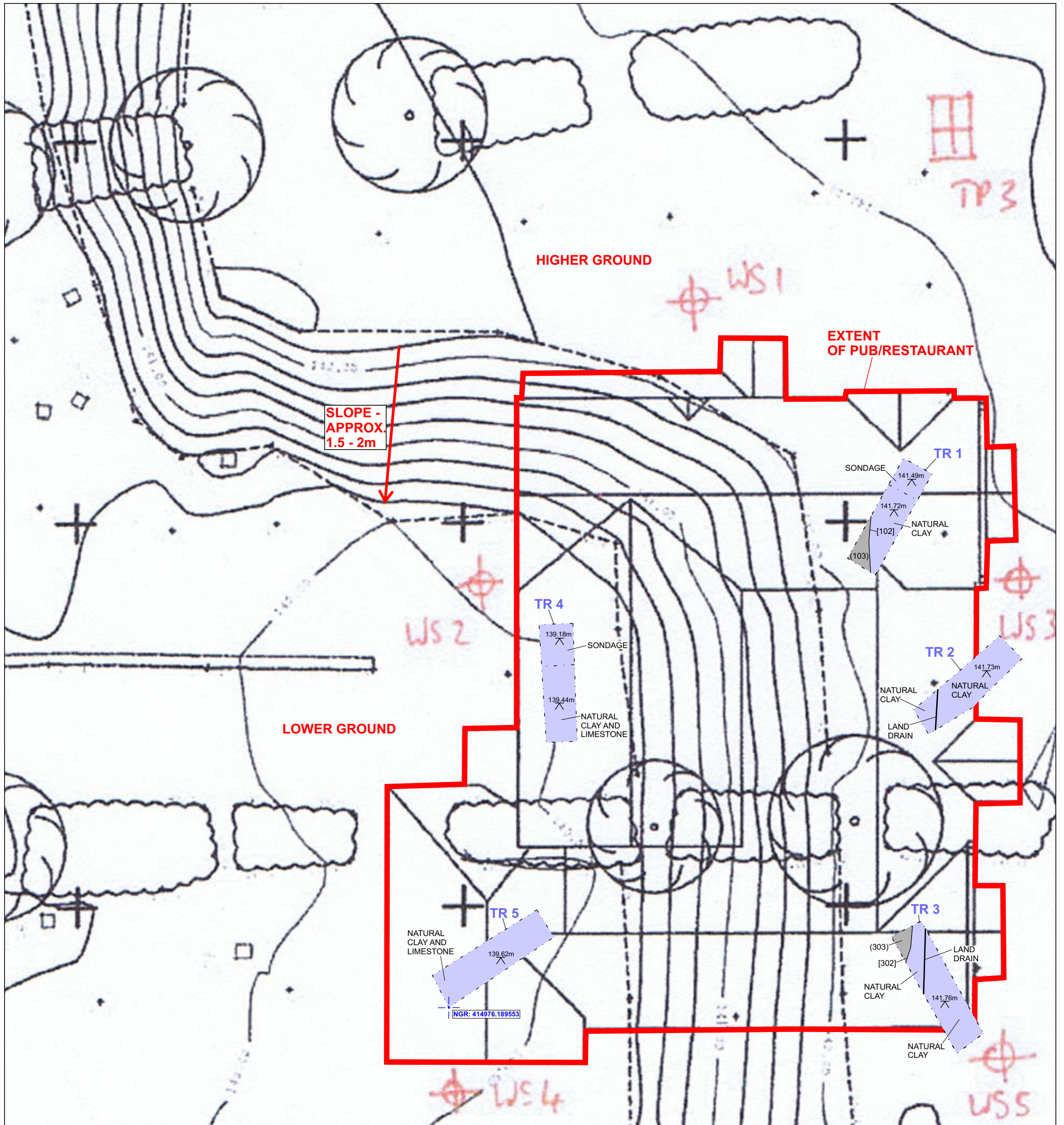
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Site Code: LRB15
Accession Code:

FIGURE 1: Site Location





TRENCH 1 LOOKING SOUTHWEST



TRENCH 2 LOOKING NORTH



TRENCH 3 LOOKING SOUTHEAST



TRENCH 4 SECTION



TRENCH 5 SECTION

<p>Site Code: LRB15</p> <p>Accession Code:</p>
<p>FIGURE 3: Photographs</p>