

**LAWNSWOOD,  
STATION ROAD,  
WARGRAVE,  
BERKSHIRE**

**NGR: SU 7834 7860**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

19<sup>th</sup> September 2001

February 2002  
Report No. 217  
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**SITE CODE: LWW01**

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## **SUMMARY**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2001 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at Lawnswood, Station Road, Wargrave, Reading, Berkshire (NGR SU 7834 7860), on behalf of Mr. Andrew Imlay.

The archaeological watching brief involved the monitoring of the groundworks associated with the construction of a new, single garage at the front of Lawnswood house. A total of three foundation trenches were cut by a mechanical excavator, in addition to the reduction of the area within the trenches.

The archaeological monitoring works identified no features or deposits of archaeological significance.

## 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.

### *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, in this case the Lias Clays and sandy gravels.

### *NGR*

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### *OD*

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

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2001 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at Lawnswood, Station Road, Wargrave, Reading, Berkshire (NGR SU 7834 7860), commissioned by Mr. Andrew Imlay. The archaeological watching brief was to monitor the groundworks associated with the construction of a new, single garage in the front garden immediately to the east of Lawnswood house.
- 1.2 The watching brief area was located adjacent to the church within the medieval village of Wargrave. The site therefore had the potential to reveal significant archaeological deposits and/or finds. The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994), *Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage (London Region) and the Project Design prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2001). Although no specific brief had been issued by Babcote Group, the watching brief was also carried out to the applicable County standards.
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief and conforms to the specification set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991).

## 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The village of Wargrave is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and the church, which lay adjacent to the watching brief area, dates from the early medieval period. The name of 'Wargrave' suggests the presence of a cemetery within the village, and it is commonly thought that soldiers from the 17<sup>th</sup> century Civil War were buried in Wargrave. Lawnswood house stands within a part of the village developed within the last century, near the centre of the original village. At the east end of Station Road stand two Tudor houses, but Lawnswood itself dated to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.2 The site itself lay on an area of lawn situated immediately to the east of the house, in use as part the front gardens of Lawnswood. This area was, until 1987, wooded.
- 2.3 The study area, therefore, contained the potential for the preservation of archaeological features and deposits, predominantly associated with the medieval period. This in no way prejudiced the works against the recovery of finds or features relating to other periods.

### **3 AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the 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.
- 3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the Project Design (Foundations Archaeology 1999).
- i) to define, identify and record any archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible.
  - ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site.
  - iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The construction of the new garage required the excavation of three trenches and the reduction of the area within the 'box' by 0.2m-0.25m. Trench 1 measured 6m by 0.55m, Trench 2 was 6.5m by 0.55m and Trench 3 was 6m by 0.55m. Each trench was dug to a depth of 1m, or until the natural geology was reached. Groundworks were undertaken by a mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision.

### **5 RESULTS**

- 5.1 All trenches were excavated to the natural geology. This comprised light orange brown hard, compact clay sand with flints. Each trench was excavated to an average depth of 1m. No archaeologically significant finds, features or deposits were present.
- 5.2 The natural deposits were overlain by a mid grey brown, loose, very humic, clay sand subsoil with occasional small, sub-angular flint nodules, chalk, charcoal and brick flecks. This layer varied in depth from 0.30m to 0.50m, at its shallowest in Trench 3. Fragments of ceramic building material, concrete and a rim-sherd from a German Stoneware bottle were recovered from this layer.
- 5.3 The subsoil was overlain by a dark brown loose, very humic silt sand topsoil with turf covering, 0.15m thick. Finds included slate, glass and china fragments.

## **6 NATURE OF THE RECORD**

6.1 The stratigraphic archive for the site consists of the following elements:

Written Records (context sheets and index sheets)  
Drawn Records (plans and sections)  
Photographic Records (black & white photographs and colour slides)  
Finds

6.2 The on-site methodologies used to recover any evidence were set out in the Foundations Archaeology Project Design (2001). In summary the following excavation methods were utilised; observation of all groundworks associated with the construction of the garage. The groundworks were undertaken by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothed bucket. All site recording was undertaken in accordance with the Project Design. The records are available in the archive.

6.3 Following the completion of the Watching Brief an ordered, indexed, and internally consistent site archive has been compiled in accordance with Appendix 3 of The Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).

## **7 DISCUSSION**

7.1 The watching brief identified no finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance.

7.2 All the finds recovered from the topsoil and subsoil were of modern origin, with the exception of a sherd of late 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century German Stoneware recovered from the subsoil. As a single find amongst fragments of modern material it was likely to be just a stray find, deposited residually.

7.3 It is probable that the study area was initially part of the parkland, which may have been originally owned by the church, the land only being parcelled out for building in recent years. The site had remained wooded until 1987. This may provide a reason for the absence of archaeologically significant finds or features of medieval or later date within the study area.

7.4 The potential for the recovery of archaeologically significant features or deposits at the centre of old Wargrave remains high. The results of the watching brief, however, suggest that the study area may be considered to be of low archaeological potential.



## **8 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

IFA 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Institute of Field Archaeologists

Foundations Archaeology 2001 *Lawnswood, Wargrave: Project Design*.

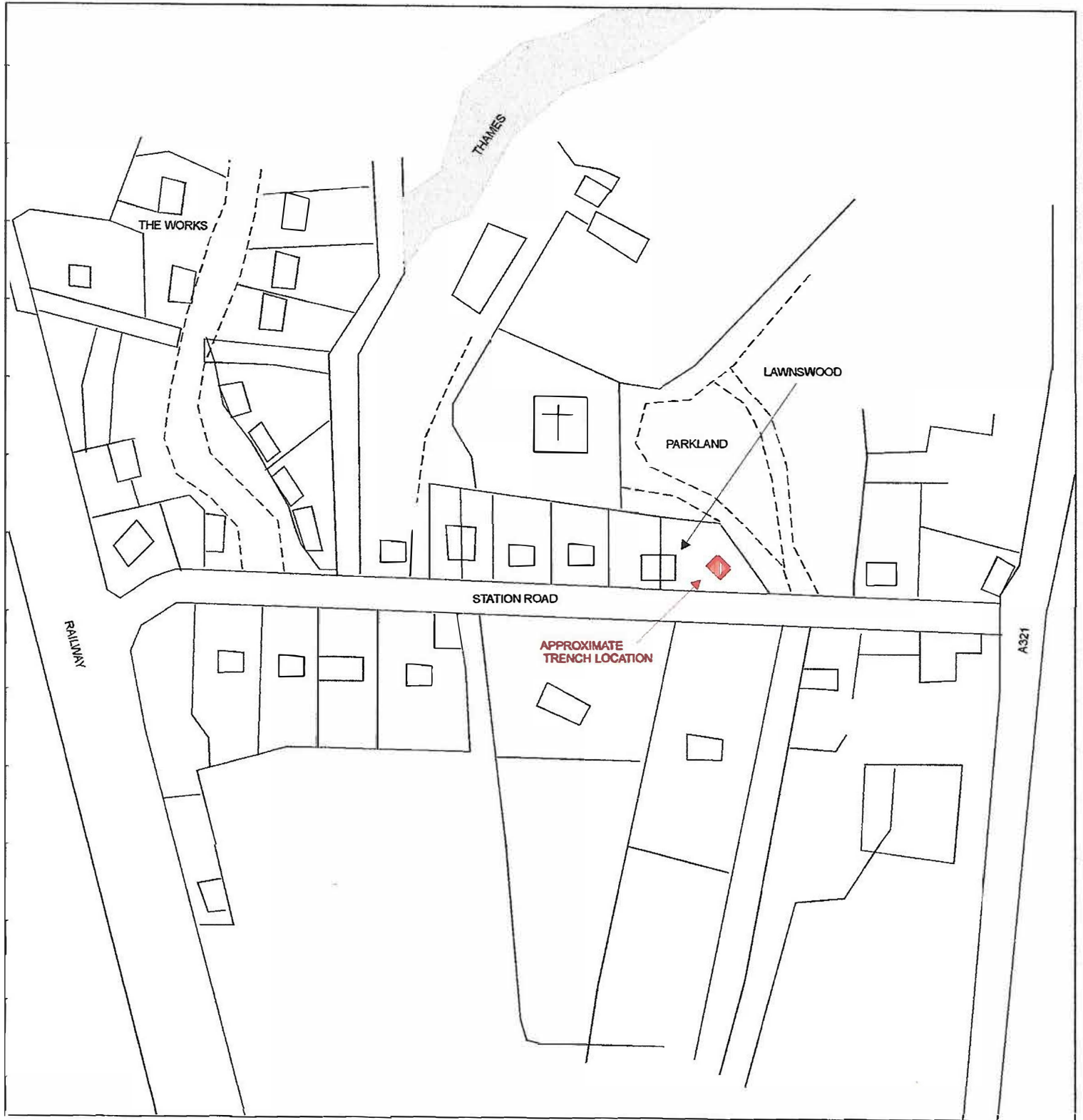
## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION**



**FIGURE 2: TRENCH LOCATION**