

**MAX CAFE,
PADWORTH,
WEST BERKSHIRE.**

NGR: SU 611 685

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

In September 2009 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Max Café, Padworth, Berkshire (NGR: SU 611 685). The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of three test pits within a proposed development area.

No archaeological features or finds were present within the investigated areas. However, natural gravels and soil deposits were present within all three test pits and there was no evidence for significant modern truncation or disturbance.

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 the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* 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

Period from *circa* 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.

Roman

The period traditionally dated between AD 43 and AD 410.

Saxon

The period traditionally dated between AD 410 and AD 1066.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in September 2009 on land at Max Café, Padworth, Berkshire (NGR: SU 611 685).
- 1.2 It is proposed to re-develop the land at Max Café. A predetermination archaeological field evaluation was requested, by the archaeological advisor to West Berkshire Council, in order to determine the potential archaeological impact of the development proposal.
- 1.3 The archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with the Specification prepared by The Historic Environment Consultancy (2009), the principals of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990), the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (IfA 2008) and the archaeological policies of West Berkshire Council.
- 1.4 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There is no known archaeological interest in the specific area of the proposed development, however, extensive cropmarks are known in nearby fields, indicating that evidence for past human activity is present in the area.
- 2.2 The study area therefore contained the potential for the preservation of archaeological features and deposits.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The general 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; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow informed 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 of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The project required the excavation of three 3m by 1.8m test pits within the proposed development area, the test pit locations are shown in Figure 2.
- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed to the top of archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved with the use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Thereafter the test pits were cleaned and all additional excavation was conducted by hand.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the Specification and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 **Test Pit 1** (3m by 1.8m) was largely obscured by two service pipes. In order to ascertain the depth of the natural substrates, a sondage, which measured 1m by 1m, was excavated between the services. Natural gravel deposits were present at a depth of 0.88m (51.56m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural deposits were overlaid by a brown clay/sand/gravel soil (102), up to 0.45m thick, which contained a single CBM fragment. Layer (102) was overlaid by a modern make-up layer (101), up to 0.43m thick, which consisted of a mix of clinker, loosecore and rubble. No archaeological finds or features were present within the test pit.
- 5.2 **Test Pit 2** (3.6m by 2m) was excavated onto natural gravel deposits at a depth of 0.85m (51.59m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural deposits were overlaid by a dark brown clay sand soil (203), up to 0.11m thick, which contained a single Post-medieval/modern tile fragment. Layer (203) was overlaid by a brown clay/sand/gravel (202), up to 0.21m thick, which was, in turn overlaid by a mixed sand and soil modern make-up layer (201), up to 0.53m thick. No archaeological finds or features were present within the test pit.
- 5.3 **Test Pit 3** (3m by 1.8m) was excavated onto natural gravel deposits at a depth of 1m (51.45m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural deposits were overlaid by a brown clay gravel soil (304), up to 0.20m thick. This was overlaid by a grey/green clay gravel soil (303), up to 0.30m thick. Layer (303) was sealed by a modern make-up layer (302), up to 0.40m, which comprised a mixture of tarmac clinker and rubble. Make-up (302) was overlaid by tarmac (301), up to 0.10m thick. No archaeological finds or features were present within the test pit.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 No archaeological features or finds were present within the investigated areas. However, natural gravels and soil deposits were present within all three test pits and there was no evidence for significant modern truncation or disturbance.
- 6.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the West Berkshire Museum Service under accession number NEBYM 2009.37. A short note will be submitted for publication in a relevant journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The Historic Environment Consultancy. 2009. *Archaeological Specification Evaluation Exercise Max Café, Padworth, Berkshire*. Unpublished report.

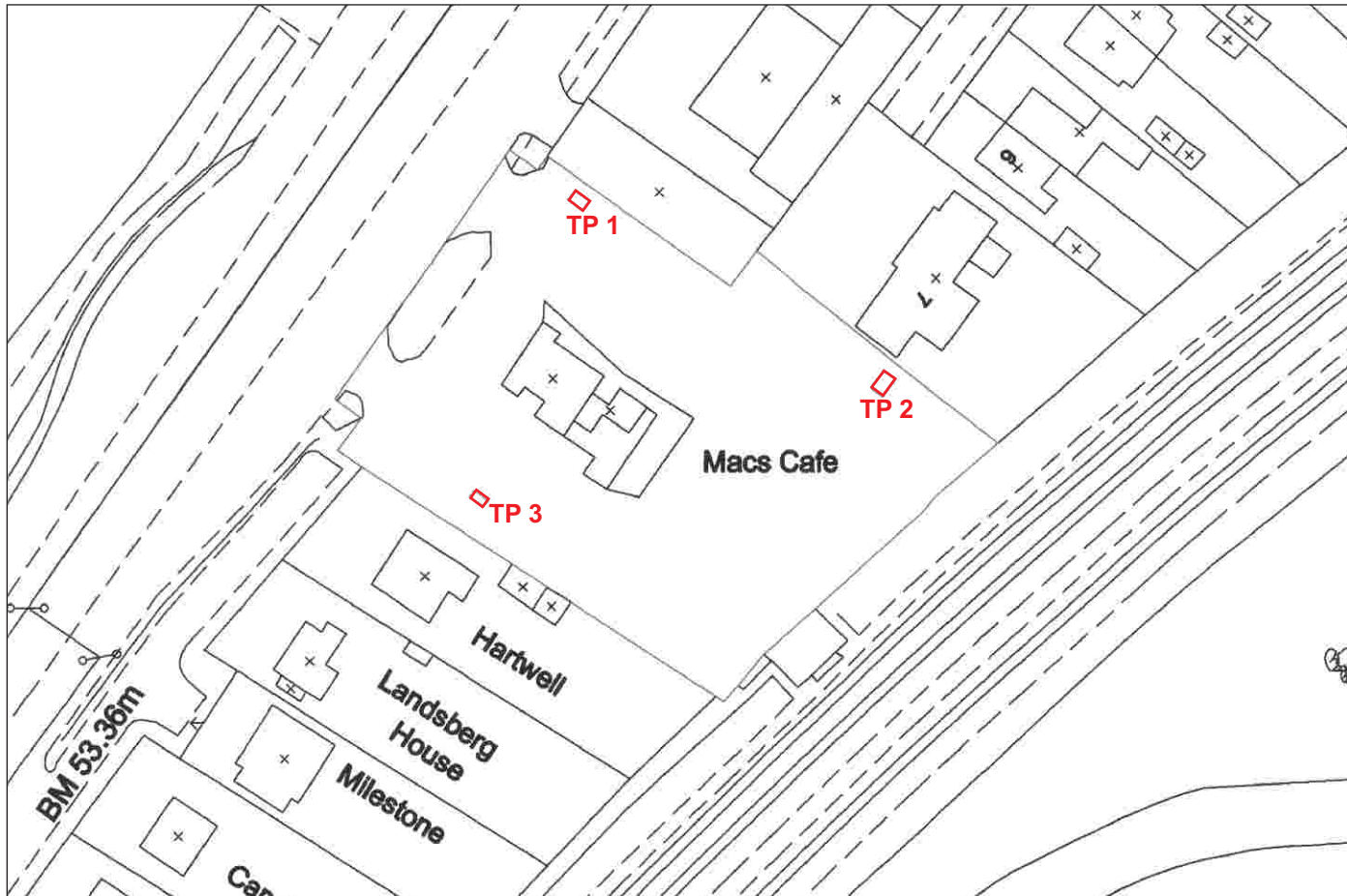
8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 1: Site Location



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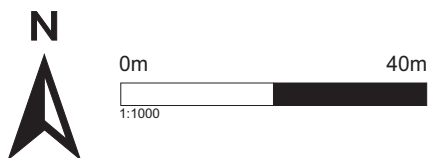


FIGURE 2: Test Pit Locations