

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**The Cock Tavern, 96 The Broadway, Chesham,
Buckinghamshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Aiji Castle

**Site Code: CTC14/28
(SP 9597 0177)**

The Cock Tavern, 96 The Broadway, Chesham, Buckinghamshire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Ridgepoint Homes**

by Aiji Castle

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CTC14/28

February 2014

Summary

Site name: The Cock Tavern, 96 The Broadway, Chesham, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SP 9597 0177

Site activity: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 13th February 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Aiji Castle

Site code: CTC 14/28

Area of site: approx. 130 sq m

Summary of results: Foundations for the project involved minimal below ground disturbance other than the digging of drainage trenches. No archaeological features or finds were observed in these trenches.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 20.02.14
	Steve Preston ✓ 19.02.14

The Cock Tavern, 96 The Broadway, Chesham, Buckinghamshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Aiji Castle

Report 14/28

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at The Cock Tavern, 96 The Broadway, Chesham, Buckinghamshire (SP 9597 0177) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Miranda Frary of Ridgepoint Homes, 67 Valley Road, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 4DT.

Planning permission (CH/2013/1345/FA) has been gained from Chiltern District Council to redevelop the rear of the site for the construction of five flats and an extension at The Cock Tavern. The consent is subject to a condition (2) relating to archaeology that requires a programme of archaeological investigation at the site. It was determined that this should take the form of a watching brief during digging of foundation and drainage trenches.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Sarah-Jane Farr, Senior Archaeology Planning Officer at Buckinghamshire County Council, archaeological advisers to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Aiji Castle on 13th February 2014 and the site code is CTC14/28. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The development site is located at the rear of The Cock Tavern, a now derelict public house fronting onto Chesham High Street, just to the south of the main residential area of the town. This lies within the Chess Valley and is bounded by Scottowe's Pond and the A416 to the west (Figs 1 and 2). Bounding the site to the north is a large supermarket and access to the rear of the development is through its car park. The site is overlooked on either side by office and business properties. The underlying geology in the area is mapped as Valley Gravel and Middle Chalk although this was not observed during the groundworks (BGS 1946). The site lies approximately 100m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The early history and archaeology of Chesham has recently been detailed for the English Heritage and Buckinghamshire County Council Historic Town Character Assessment project (EH 2011). The first documentary reference to Chesham was made in late Saxon times in a charter of AD957 and subsequently in Domesday Book of 1086 (EH 2011; Williams and Martin 2002). The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location in the historic (medieval) core of Chesham with the site lying on one of the main streets within an area retaining a burgrave plot layout. The Saxon settlement is thought to lie to the west. There is also potential for prehistoric evidence as a number of prehistoric sites have been recorded within the historic core such as at Chessvale Bowling Club and at Stratford's Yard on East Street (Stainton 2005). Salvage excavation uncovered Mesolithic flint artefacts indicating a flint-working area with evidence of later re-use in the Neolithic period. An excavation at Chessvale in 2003 also recorded Neolithic and Middle Bronze Age flint and pottery and a Bronze Age ring ditch (levelled burial mound).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by intrusive groundworks such as ground reduction and foundation and service trench digging.

Results

Foundations

The foundations for the new development comprised piles and groundbeams with the intention of raising the finished floor level of the new building. The piles were inserted without removal of an existing concrete cap which lay above made ground, and the groundbeams were only to be partially inserted into the existing surface. As such it was only the piles which penetrated deep enough to reach the archaeologically relevant horizons and no monitoring of the groundbeams took place.

Drainage trenches (Fig. 3)

A total of approximately 35m length of trenching was dug at a width of 0.40m. The depths of the trenches varied between 0.30m and 0.53m but the stratigraphy within the trenches remained constant. This consisted of 0.10m of

concrete capping overlying up to 0.30m of modern crushed concrete and scalpins. A modern made ground layer consisting of brick and crushed concrete was observed beneath this to the base of the trenches. No archaeological deposits or features were encountered and the natural geology was not reached during any phase of the groundworks.

Finds

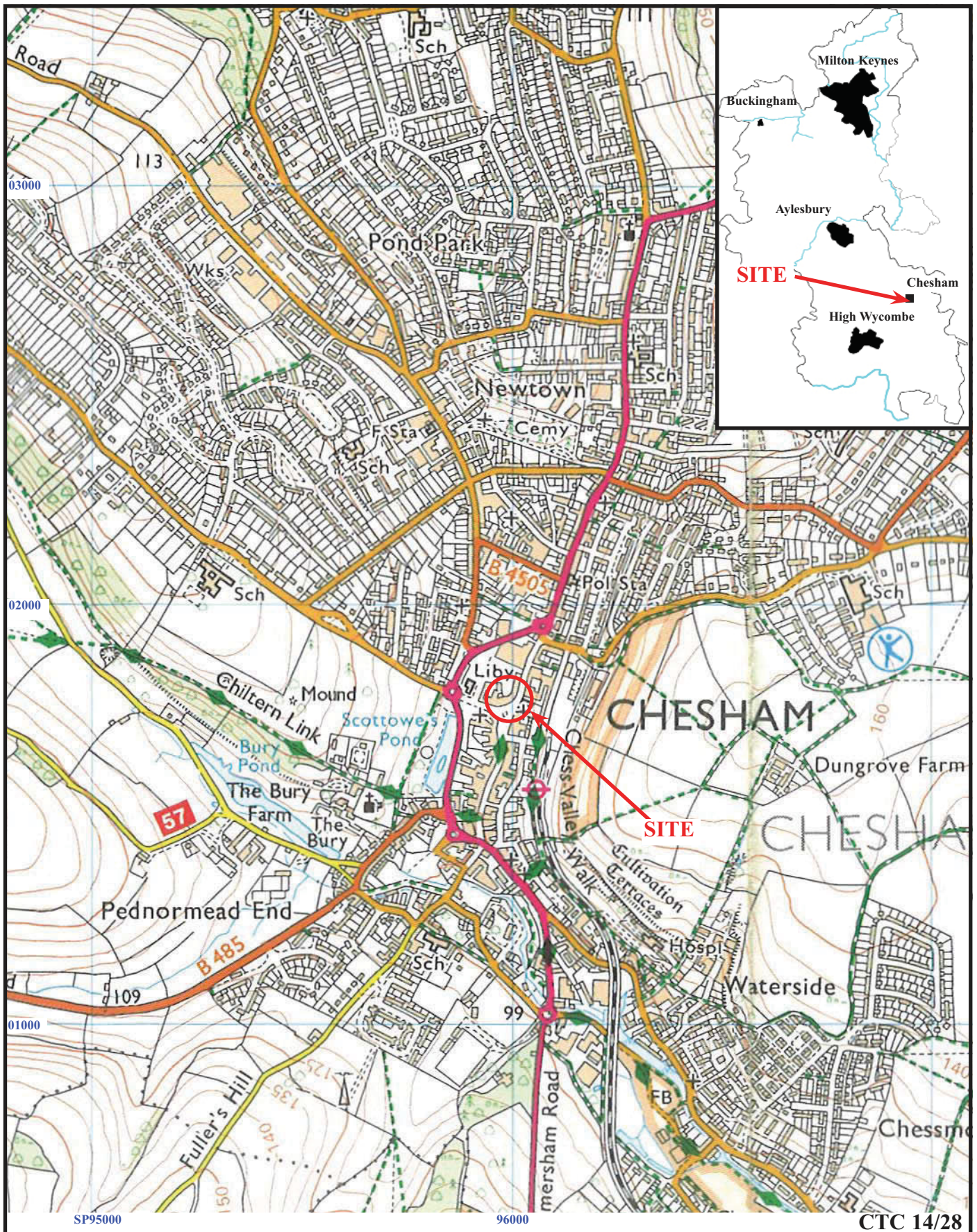
No finds of archaeological interest were observed during the groundworks.

Conclusion

No deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during the watching brief. However the nature of the foundation design and the shallowness of the drainage trenches which were monitored, did not allow inspection of the archaeologically relevant horizon, which were buried by a thickness of modern made ground.

References

- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 238, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- EH, 2011, 'Chesham: Historic Town Assessment Report', (Draft), Buckinghamshire County Council and English Heritage, Aylesbury
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dep Communities Local Government, London
- Stainton, B, 1995, 'Fieldwork by the Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society (CVAHS) in the Buckinghamshire Chilterns' in R Holgate (ed), *Chiltern Archaeology, Recent Work*, Dunstable, 124–30
- Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

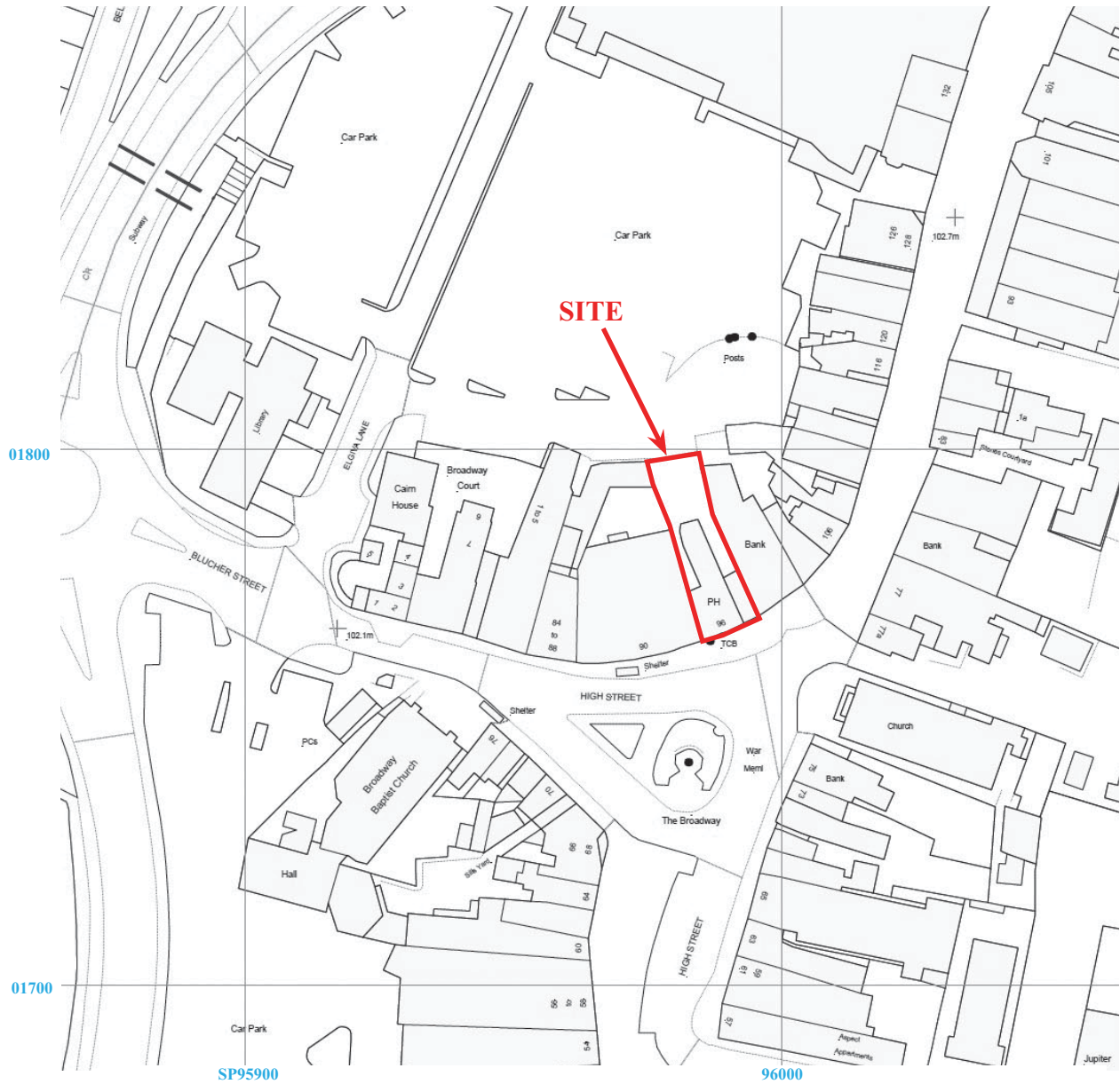


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Figure 1. Location of site within Chesham and Buckinghamshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Figure 3. Monitored works



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Plate 1. Excavation of pipe trenches in progress, looking north.



Plate 2. Representative section of pipe trench, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.

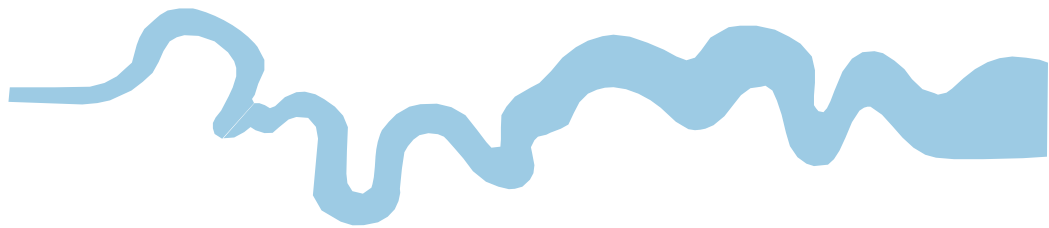
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Archaeological watching brief
Plates 1 - 2.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC
↓	↓



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