

Cholesbury New House, Parrots Lane, Cholesbury, Buckinghamshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Martin Wood

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PLC 06/135

March 2007

Summary

Site name: Cholesbury New House, Parrots Lane, Cholesbury, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SP 92819 07182

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 11th – 31st January 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Jennifer Lowe

Site code: PLC 06/135

Summary of results: No archaeological finds or features were noted during the watching brief.

Monuments identified: None

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

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Report 06/135

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Cholesbury New House, Parrots Lane, Cholesbury, Buckinghamshire (SP 92819 07182) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Alan Drumm of Bryden Wood Associates, 99 Charterhouse Street, London, EC1M 6HR, on behalf of Mr Martin Wood.

Planning consent (app no 05/2330) has been granted by Chiltern District Council for the construction of a new house and garage at the above address. This consent has been granted with a condition relating to archaeology (8), which requires that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, Archaeological Planning and Conservation Officer with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, adviser to the District on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Cass and Jennifer Lowe between 11th and 31st January 2007, and the site code is PLC 06/135.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located close to the historic core of the village of Cholesbury, which is approximately 4km south of Tring, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 2). The site is situated on a relatively flat plot of land, which rises gently northeastwards from Parrots Lane towards the earthworks of Cholesbury Camp, which form the eastern boundary of the site. A previous house on the site had recently been demolished, prior to the watching brief commencing. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Clay with Flints (BGS 1972), and this was confirmed during the watching brief. The site lies at a height of approximately 187m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief provided by Mr David Radford of Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service. In summary, the site lies close to the likely main entrance of Cholesbury Camp, a large Iron Age hillfort, which was partially excavated in the 1930s (Kimball 1933) and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 27161). The excavations showed the presence of hearths and ovens as well as evidence suggesting iron smelting occurred on site (Kimball 1933). The hillfort subsequently became the site for the 12th-century parish church and possibly an associated manorial site suggested by geophysical survey (Gover 2001). Historic maps suggest that the post-medieval settlement spread outside the hill circuit within an area where the present development site is located.

Several archaeological investigations have taken place within close proximity to the site with varying degrees of success. A watching brief carried out during the construction of a new stile adjacent to the external defences of the hillfort failed to identify any features associated with the monument, however two struck flints were recovered during the course of these works (Farley 1999). Similarly no archaeological finds or features associated with the hillfort were recorded during work at Moat House (BCAMS 1992; Hunn 2004), to the south-east of the site, and Cholesbury Village Hall (BCAMS 1997).

A section of the outer ditch of the rampart was recorded during work at the Old Vicarage which is located to the south-east of New House (Lightfoot 2002).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to record, and if necessary excavate, any archaeological deposits which would be damaged or destroyed by the new groundworks. Particular attention was to be paid to the recovery of evidence for prehistoric deposits associated with the hillfort earthwork remains, along with any deposits relating to medieval and early post-medieval occupation.

Results

The foundation trenches observed were approximately 0.7m wide and 2m deep. The ground surface had previously been quite disturbed, during the construction and demolition of the previous house on the site. The stratigraphy observed in the sections of the trenches consisted of about 0.2m of mid greyish brown silty clay subsoil lying directly above the natural orange sandy clay with occasional flints. Cleaner sand was observed towards the base of the trench. No archaeological finds or features were noted in the foundation trenches.

The development proposal also included construction of a basement. This area was stripped down to the natural geology. At the north end of the plot the natural sandy clay with flints was truncated by about 0.80m. No archaeological finds or features were observed in the basement area.

Finds

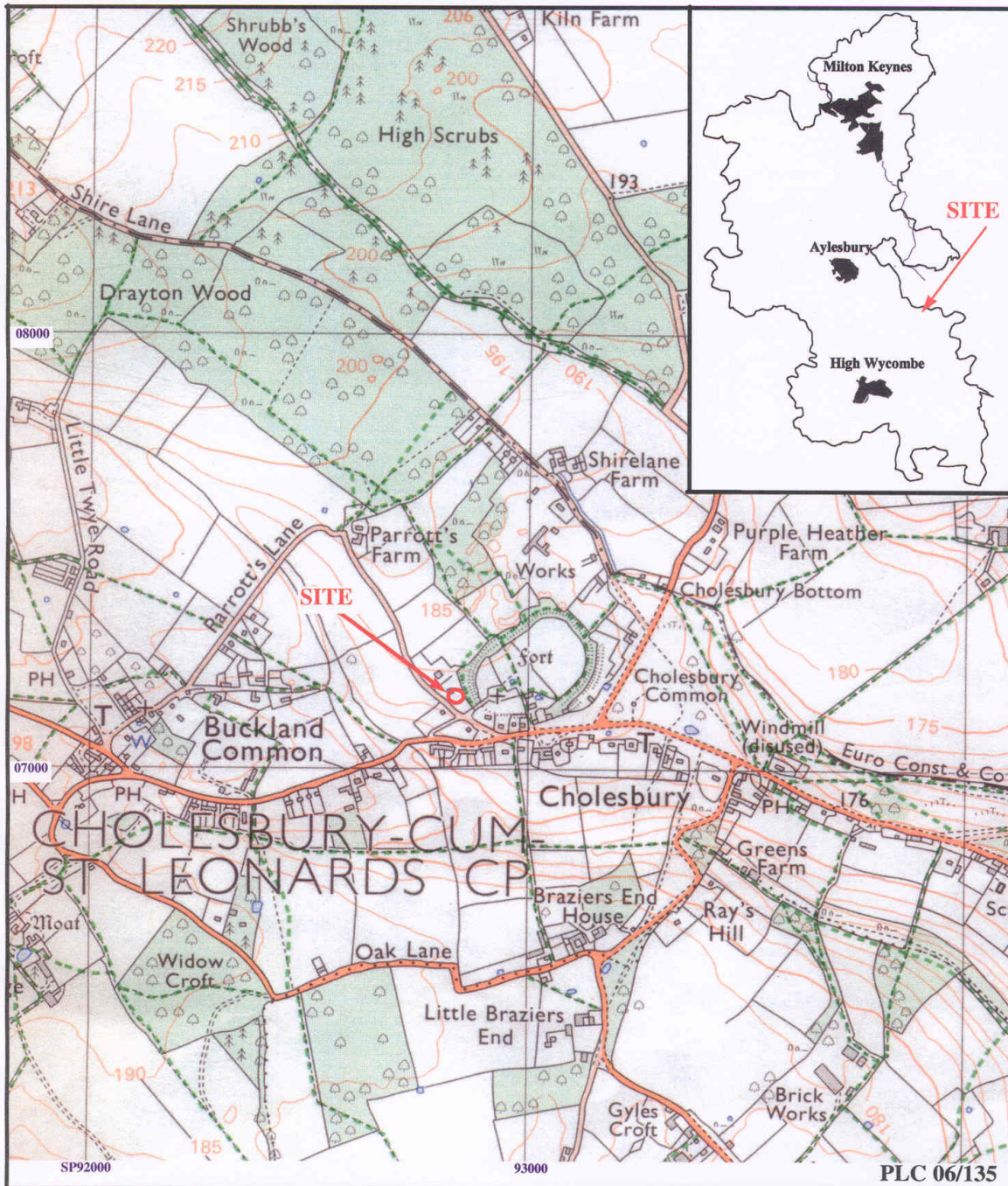
There were no archaeological finds recovered during the watching brief.

Conclusion

No archaeological finds or features were observed during the watching brief, which may suggest that the anticipated medieval and early post-medieval occupation may have been to the south-east and east of the present site.

References

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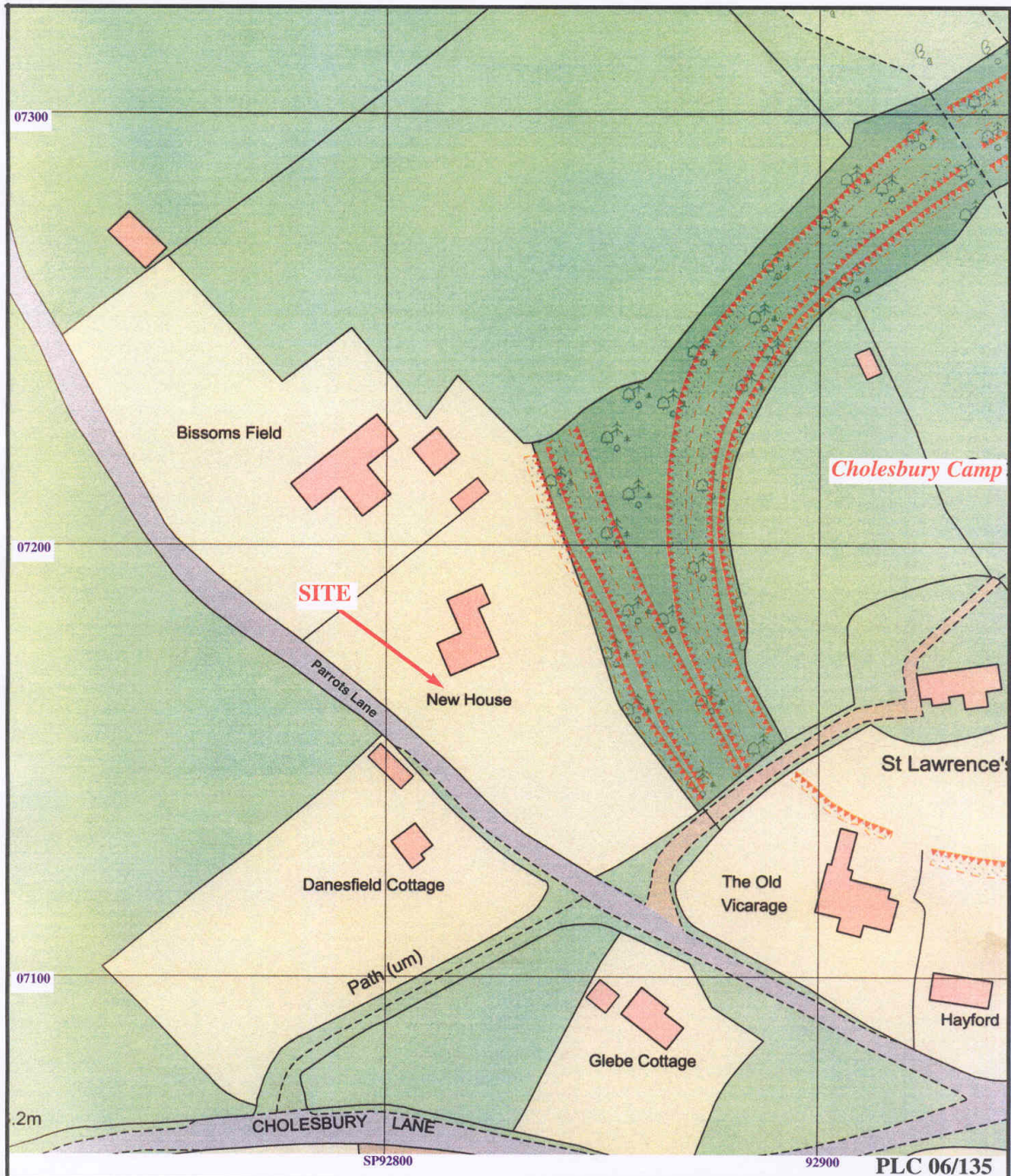


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Figure 1. Location of site within Cholesbury and Buckinghamshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Parrot Lane.

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Scale: 1:2500

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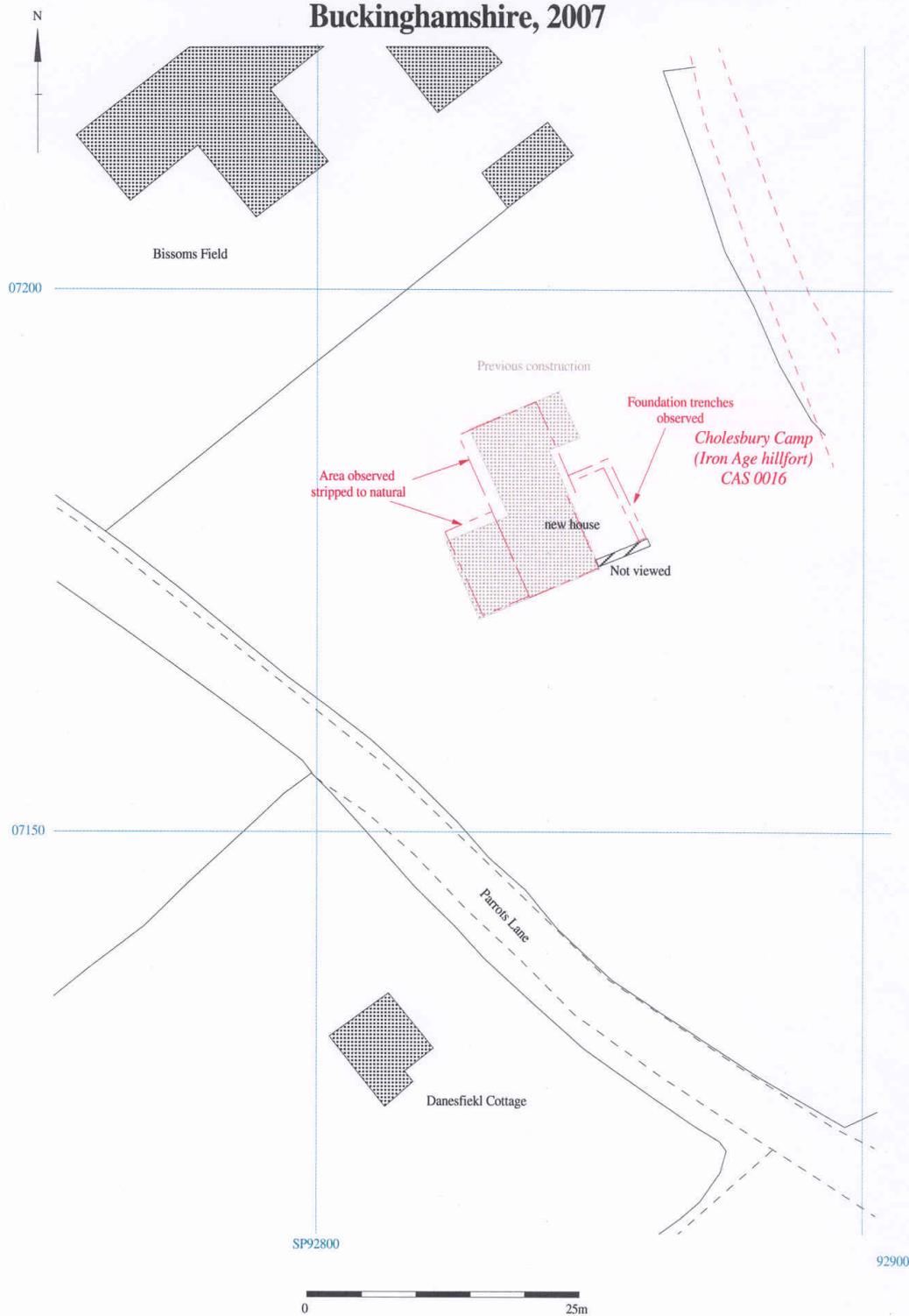
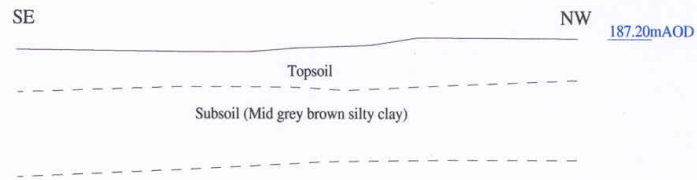


Figure 3. Areas observed during watching brief.

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Natural (Orange sandy clay with occasional flints)



Figure 4. Representative section of footing trench