

Mullions, 11 Market Hill, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs Howard

by James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code MMW 08/77

April 2009

Summary

Site name: Mullions, 11 Market Hill, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SP7998 2090

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 28th – 29th April 2009

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: MMW 08/77

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were identified

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 ✓ 01.05.09
	Steve Preston ✓ 01.05.09

Mullions, 11 Market Hill, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire **An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 08/77

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Mullions, 11 Market Hill, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire (SP 7998 2090) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Howard, Mullions, 11 Market Hill, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire, HP22 4JB.

Planning consent (08/01020/APP) has been granted by Aylesbury Vale District Council for the construction of a single-storey rear extension and detached garage/store at Mullions, 11 Market Hill, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire. As a condition of the planning permission and in line with *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16, 1990) and the District policies on archaeology, an archaeological watching brief was required during groundworks.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by, and based on a brief provided by, Mr David Radford, Archaeological Officer for Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services, advising the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury between 28th April and 29th April 2009 and the site code is MMW 08/77.

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 site is located to the rear of 11 Market Hill, in Whitchurch, which is 6 km north of Aylesbury (Fig. 1). The site lies off the A413 and is a residential property within the Whitchurch Conservation Area near Bolebec Castle (Fig. 2). The site is currently occupied by a residential property and terraced gardens; the main area of groundworks is located under the previous garage on the site. The underlying geology is described as Portland Sand members consisting of sand, sandstone and limestone (BGS 2002) which were observed in the exposed groundworks. The site lies at c. 140m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The brief provided by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (Radford 2008) has highlighted in detail the potential of the site. In summary the site lies within the historic core of Whitchurch adjacent to Bolebec Castle, a 12th-century motte and bailey castle which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 19058). The extension is also to a Grade II Listed Building of likely 16th-century date. Whitchurch has Saxon origins and is recorded in Domesday Book. The place name suggests the presence of a rare Saxon stone church which may indicate a wealthy or high status settlement, although it was a very small manor at the time of Domesday Book (AD1086) and there is no mention of a church at this time though Domesday Book is not always a very reliable guide to churches (Williams and Martin 2002). The manor became the seat of the Bolebec family after the Norman Conquest (Radford 2008).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which would be damaged or destroyed by the new groundworks. Particular attention was to be paid to the recovery of evidence relating to medieval remains and any deposits relating to the castle such as outworks and extra mural settlement.

The digging of the foundation trenches of the new garage and conservatory was observed. The footings were dug using a mini-digger fitted with a toothless bucket and partly by hand. Spoil heaps were monitored for finds.

Results

The trenches for the garage extended for an area of 10.6m by 6.0m, mainly over the position of the demolished garage (Fig. 3) and were 0.70m wide and 1.0m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.05m of concrete above 0.45m of made ground consisting of brick and tile, over natural geology which varied between limestone and grey-green sand (Fig. 4).

The foundation trenches for the new conservatory were located adjacent to the present conservatory and were 0.70m wide and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy here comprised 0.22m of topsoil directly overlying limestone.

No archaeological deposits were observed in any of the exposed groundworks.

Finds

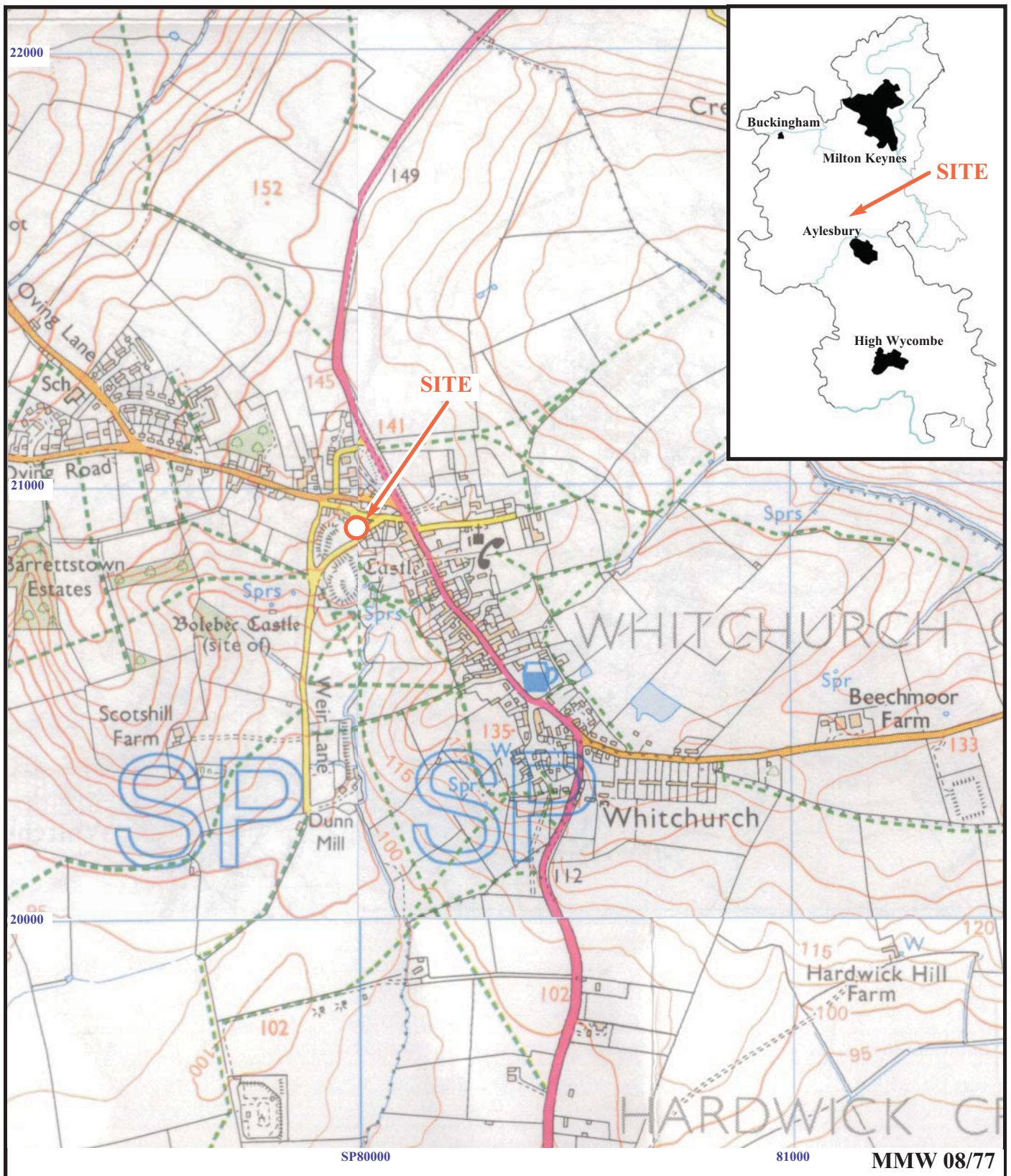
No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

Archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site as seen in the exposed groundworks, however despite the site's proximity to the Norman motte and bailey castle and the possible 16th-century listed building, no finds or archaeological deposits were observed in any of the exposed trenches.

References

BGS, 2002, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 219, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
Radford, D, 2008, 'Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Mullions, 11 Market Hill, Whitchurch',
Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, Aylesbury
Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

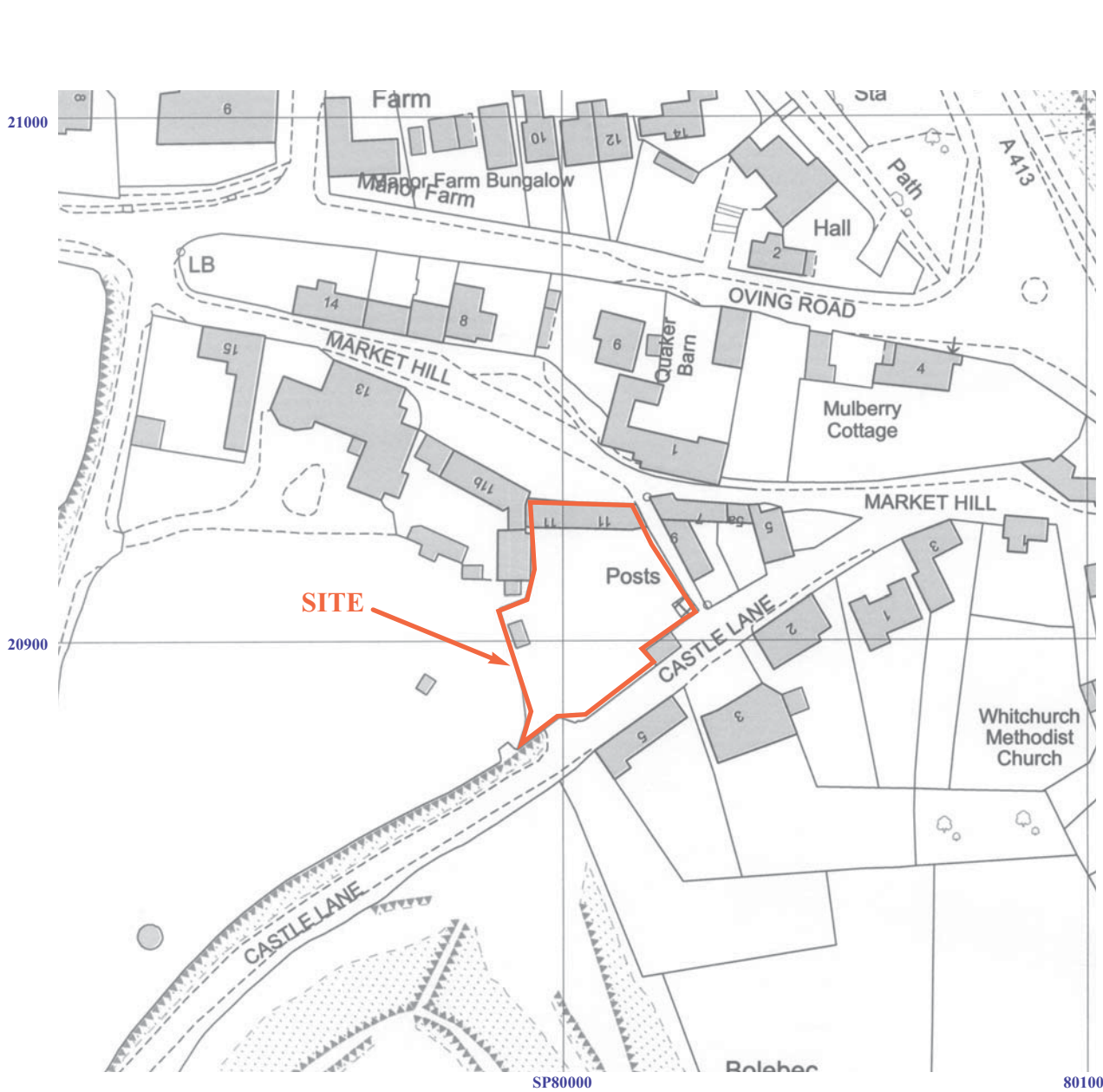


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Figure 1. Location of site within Whitchurch and Buckinghamshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site off Market Hill.

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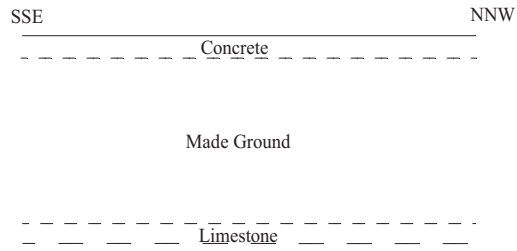
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Figure 3. Location of groundworks

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West footing of storage area



Central footing of Garage and Storage Area

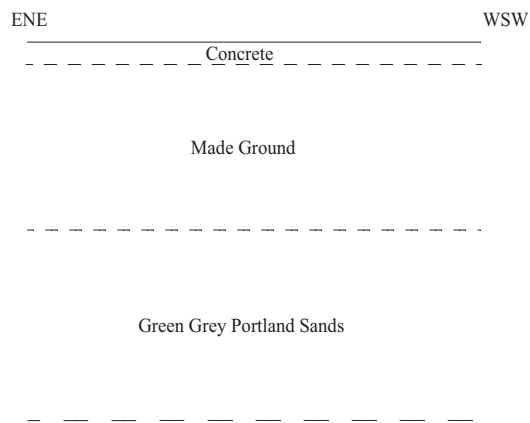


Figure 4. Representative Sections