



**Archaeological Field Evaluation**

**Gloucester City Homes**

Winsley Road

Matson

Gloucester

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*Cover: View south of north-facing section of Trench 3, with garaging in background*

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## 1 Executive Summary

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*Border Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Gloucester City Homes to undertake a programme of archaeological field evaluation at Winsley Road Matson Gloucester GL4 4NQ (SO85272 15625). The site lies to the SE of the centre of the city of Gloucester. Site work took place on June 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> 2015.*

*Four trenches were excavated down to natural deposits. A layer of disturbed natural clay was recorded beneath modern surfaces (Trenches 2-4) or turf (Trench 1), probably associated with 20<sup>th</sup> -century levelling and landscaping activity. This lay above undisturbed natural deposits.*

*No deposits, features or finds of archaeological significance were present on the site. The remains of a brick-paved car park or hard-standing surface were identified in Trenches 2, 3 & 4. This appears to have been associated with garaging situated between Matson Avenue and Winsley Road, which is first shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map of 1956*

## 2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Gloucester City Homes to undertake a programme of archaeological field evaluation at Winsley Road Matson Gloucester GL4 4NQ (SO85272 15625) in advance of a proposed development (*fig. 1*). Site work took place on June 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> 2015.



*Fig. 1: Location plan*

Copies of this report will be submitted to the Client, Andrew Armstrong Esq. City Archaeologist (CA) and the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record.

### 3 Site description

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The proposed development site is located at a height of approximately 36m AOD within the medieval settlement of Matson, approximately 3.5km SE of Gloucester city centre, and lies parallel to the line of the Portway Roman road close to the point at which it divides and follows the route of the medieval Painswick Road. The site occupies land which rises steeply to the SW to reach the summit of Robinswood Hill at c. 198 m AOD and is situated approximately 200m E of a known focus of Roman, Saxon and medieval settlement activity.

#### 3.1 Soils and Geology

Due to its urban location, this area has not been surveyed by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983). However, the British Geological Survey records the underlying geology of the study area as comprising Lower Lias clays of the Jurassic period (Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 234) (BGS 2014).

### 4 Methodology

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The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with practices set out in *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014) and *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014). Border Archaeology adheres to the ClfA *Code of conduct* (2014).

Four trenches (*fig. 1*) were excavated using a wide-blade toothless ditching bucket. Undifferentiated topsoil and overburden of recent origin were removed by machine to natural deposits.

#### 3.1 Recording

Full written and photographic records were made in accordance with Border Archaeology's *Field Recording Manual* (2014). The written record comprised a pro-forma context record for each stratigraphic unit. No archaeological features or deposits were present on the site so minimum levels of recording were carried out. Sketch plans and sections were drawn on each record sheet. A temporary benchmark (TBM) was established.

A photographic record of all stratigraphic units was made using a high-resolution digital camera. Included in each photograph was an appropriate scale and all photographic records were indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details concerning subject and direction of view were maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

No deposits or features of archaeological significance were present on the site. No finds were recovered and no samples were taken.

## 5 Historical and Archaeological Background

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The site at Winsley Road Matson lies within an area with moderate potential for revealing evidence of Roman and medieval occupation.

In 1878, during the construction of Matson Rectory, located approximately 200m W of the site, a small assemblage of pottery of Roman date was identified, together with animal bones, within what was described as a 'moat or trench'. The location of the find-spot is marked on the OS 1<sup>st</sup>-edition map of 1884 but no evidence of earthworks has survived to the present. Nevertheless, these finds may be indicative of a focus of Roman occupation somewhere in the vicinity of the site.

Evidence of Roman settlement was also identified to the E of the site during the construction of new houses at The Wheatridge in 1977, where an assemblage of Roman pottery sherds, red sandstone tiles, *tegulae* and Roman coins was found.

Evidence of medieval settlement has been identified to the N and NW of the site. Located approximately 300m NW of the site, immediately N of Moat Primary School, are the surviving earthworks of an oval moat enclosing an island measuring about 100m NE-SW and about 70m NW-SE. The moated site is presumed to be of medieval date and probably represents the site of the manor house of the de Mattesdon family, who held the manor of Matson in the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century. The site of a medieval chapel, possibly of early 12<sup>th</sup>-century date, is also marked on the OS 1<sup>st</sup>-edition map, approximately 300m NNW of the site.

The site lies on the E edge of a formerly extensive estate belonging to Matson House, a late 16<sup>th</sup>-century mansion built on the site of a grange manor, which was owned by Llanthony Priory before the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Matson House itself is located about 400m WSW of the site.



## 6 Results

### 6.1 Trench 1

The trench was located on the W side of the site at a height of 39.92m OD (W end) and 39.46m OD (E end). It measured 18m × 2m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.75m.

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	101		Layer	Existing turf	Turf and topsoil 0.10m thick trench-wide. Above (102).	-	-	-	-	-	
2	102		Layer	Gravel levelling	Moderately compact gravel/clay; 0.13m thick trench-wide. Below (101), above (103)	-	-	-	-	-	
3	103		Fill	Redeposited natural yellow-green clay filling hollow	Firm yellowish-green clay; >0.45m deep. Beneath (104), fill of [106].	-	-	-	-	-	
4	104		Fill	Fill of [106]	Moderately compact to loose stone, brick & rubble, including tarmac. Above(103), fill of [106]	-	-	-	-	-	
5	105		Layer	Natural clay	Firm yellow grey clay; trench-wide	-	-	-	-	-	
6	106		Cut	Natural hollow?	Irregular plan; orientation unclear; break of slope top, sides, break of slope base, base unknown. Extent unclear. Filled by (103), (104)	-	-	-	-	-	



## 6.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 ran N/S to the SE of Trench 1 at a height of 39.38m OD. It measured 12m × 2m × 0.85m (maximum depth).

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	201		Layer	Tarmac surface	Indurated tarmac; 0.10m thick trench-wide. Above (202)	-	-	-	-	-	
2	202		Layer	Modern brick car park/hard-standing also identified in Tr. 3 & 4	Masonry; brick; laid in herringbone pattern (traces surviving); 0.13m thick trench-wide. Below (201), above (203)	-	-	-	-	-	
3	203		Layer	Redeposited natural used for levelling/landscaping	Firm yellowish-green clay, occasional CBM; thickness 0.50m (N), 0.20m (S). Below (202), above (204).	-	-	-	-	-	
4	204		Layer	Natural clay	Firm greenish clay; evidence for waterlogging. Below (203)	-	-	-	-	-	

### 6.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 measured 10m × 2m × 0.53m (maximum depth) and extended N/S to the S of Trench 2 at a height of some 39.97m OD.

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	301		Layer	Tarmac surface	Indurated tarmac; 0.10m thick. Above (302)	-	-	-	-	-	
2	302		Layer	Modern brick car park/hard-standing also identified in Tr. 2 & 4	Masonry; brick; laid in herringbone pattern (traces surviving); 0.16m thick. Beneath (301), above (303).	-	-	-	-	-	
3	303		Layer	Disturbed natural clay used as levelling/landscaping	Firm grey clay; occasional brick & mortar. Below (302), above (304).	-	-	-	-	-	
4	304		Layer	Natural clay	Firm grey clay; trench-wide	-	-	-	-	-	

## 6.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 measured 5m x 2m x 0.75m and was aligned N/S at a height of 39.91mOD. It was the southernmost of the four trenches to be excavated.

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	401		Layer	Tarmac surface	Indurated tarmac; 0.07m thick, trench-wide. Above (402)	-	-	-	-	-	
2	302		Layer	Modern brick car park/hard-standing also identified in Tr. 2 & 3	Masonry; brick; laid in herringbone pattern (traces surviving); 0.18m thick. Beneath (401), above (403).	-	-	-	-	-	
3	303		Layer	Disturbed natural clay used for levelling/landscaping	Firm grey clay; occasional brick & mortar. Below (402), above (404).	-	-	-	-	-	
4	304		Layer	Natural clay	Firm grey and yellow clay; trench-wide	-	-	-	-	-	

## 7 Discussion

No archaeological features or deposits were present on the site, apart from the remains of a brick-paved carpark or hard-standing surface revealed in Trenches 2, 3 & 4, which would appear to be contemporary with the housing along Matson Avenue and Winsley Road (*Plate 2*). The surface was associated with garaging situated between Matson Avenue and Winsley Road, which is first shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map of 1956.

It is possible that the area was subject to waterlogging, with the natural clays discoloured by gleying in Trenches 2-4. It is also possible that extensive landscaping and levelling of the area took place during construction of existing housing during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



*Plate 1: Trench 1 showing modern infill (104); view W*



*Plate 2: View S showing remains of brick carpark surface or hardstanding*

## 8 Copyright

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