



Archaeological Field Evaluation

On behalf of

James Sellon Esq

Concerning

Court Farm House

Overton

Hampshire

RG25 3HF

September 2018

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1 Executive Summary

Border Archaeology (BA) was instructed by James Sellon Esq to undertake Archaeological Field Evaluation (AFE) with respect to the proposed formation of a swimming pool, with pool-house and 2m brick-and-flint walls at Court Farm House Church Road Overton Hampshire RG25 3HF (Planning Ref. 17/04246/HSE).

Three evaluation trenches, representing a 5% sample of the development area, were originally proposed but, due to a subsequent reduction of this area, only a single trench was opened.

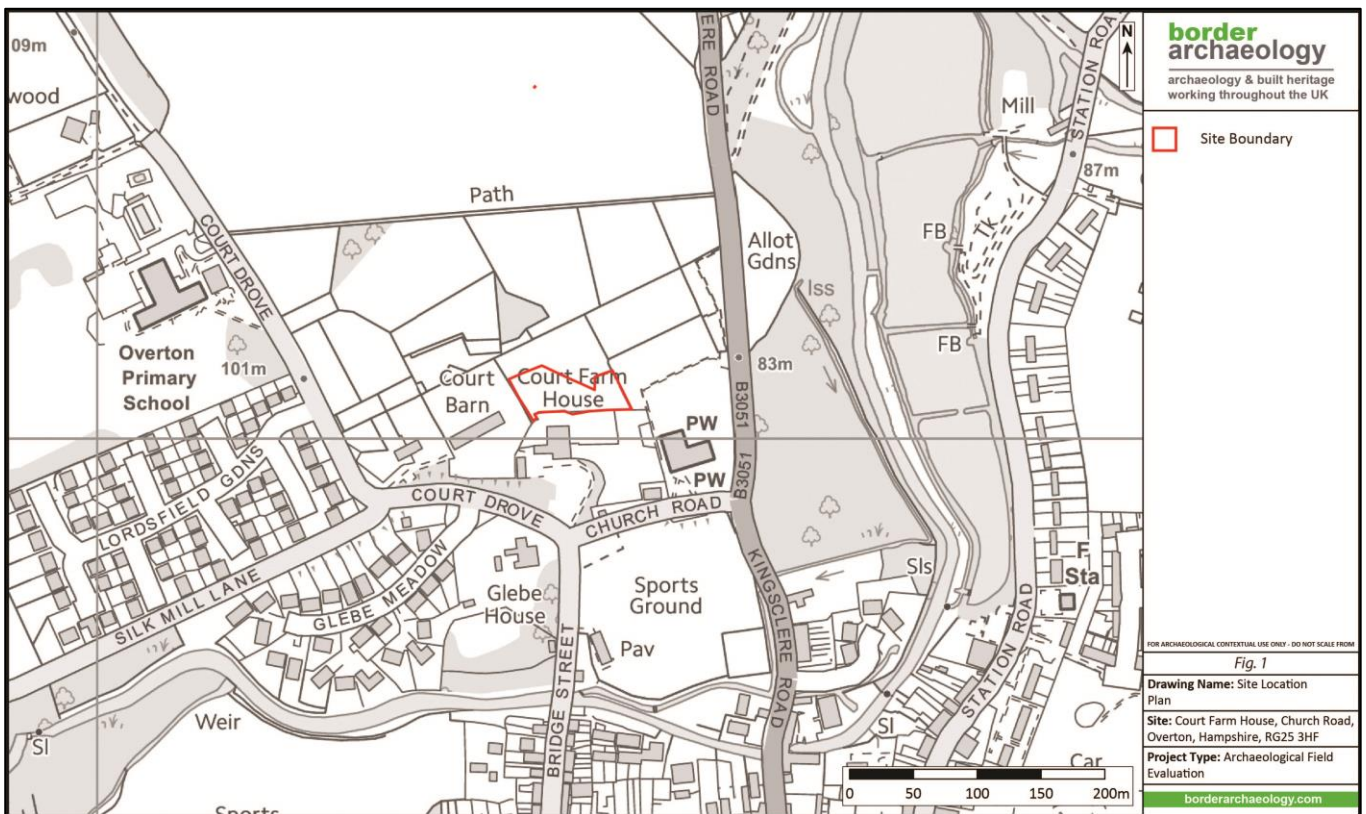
The trench was found to contain a buried post-medieval soil horizon sealed by later made-ground deposits and topsoil, the made-ground material largely comprising a spread of demolition material resulting from the removal of a range of agricultural buildings formerly occupying the site.

No archaeological structures, features, finds or deposits were revealed within the trench.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology (BA) was instructed by James Sellon Esq Court Farm House Church Road Overton Hampshire RG25 3HF to undertake Archaeological Field Evaluation (AFE) with respect, initially, to a proposed change of use at Court Farm House (NGR SU 51359 49996) from agriculture to a domestic garden (Planning Ref. 16/02001/FUL) and subsequently to the proposed formation of a swimming pool, with pool-house and 2m brick-and-flint walls (Planning Ref. 17/04246/HSE) (figs. 1 & 2).

It was originally proposed that three trenches representing approximately 5% of the planned development area would be opened; however, the reduced scope of the proposed development rendered two of the trench locations redundant and only Trench 003, as specified in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (BA June 2018), was excavated (Plate 1).



2.1 Site Description

Overton lies approximately midway between Basingstoke and Andover and some 25km N of Winchester, on the road from Winchester to Kingsclere. The site lies at a height of between 83m and 101m AOD within the historic settlement core.

An Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) encompassing the higher ground around the Church and Court Farm reflects the likelihood that this area represents the site of the rural settlement of Overton prior to the foundation of the town in the 13th century on the S side of the R. Test. Court Farm lies to the W of the Church in a slightly higher position (Hopkins 2004).

2.2 Soils & Geology

The site occupies an area above the R. Test partially comprising typical argillic brown earths of the CHARITY 2 series (571m) with adjacent calcareous alluvial gley soils of the FROME series (812a) to the N.

The brown earths are composed of well-drained flinty fine silty soils in valley bottoms with calcareous fine silty soils over chalk or chalk rubble on valley sides, whilst those of the FROME 2 series consist of shallow calcareous and non-calcareous loamy soils over flint gravel (SSEW 1983). The AFE trench revealed topsoil and made-ground deposits sealing a subsoil formed of malm (degraded clayey chalk) above the geological chalk sub-strata.

3 Aims

The overall aim of the AFE was to carry out the work in accordance with the approved WSI (BA June 2018) and to characterise, as fully as possible within the parameters of the project, any extant archaeological resource within the proposed development area and to provide information for the planning application on the presence of potentially significant archaeological remains.

The AFE programme also aimed to inform a further programme of mitigation, if required, and where possible to address specific research priorities set out in the *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (STRFHE) (Hey & Hind 2014) and in the *Hampshire Archaeological Strategy* (2012). In particular, it was considered likely that the evaluation would provide further information on the pre-town settlement around the Church and Court Farm, an area designated as being of High Archaeological Importance (Edwards 1999).

Consistent with the aims detailed in the WSI, BA was able to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion and to assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits, the results providing little basis upon which to propose further mitigation or to address any of the regional research priorities.

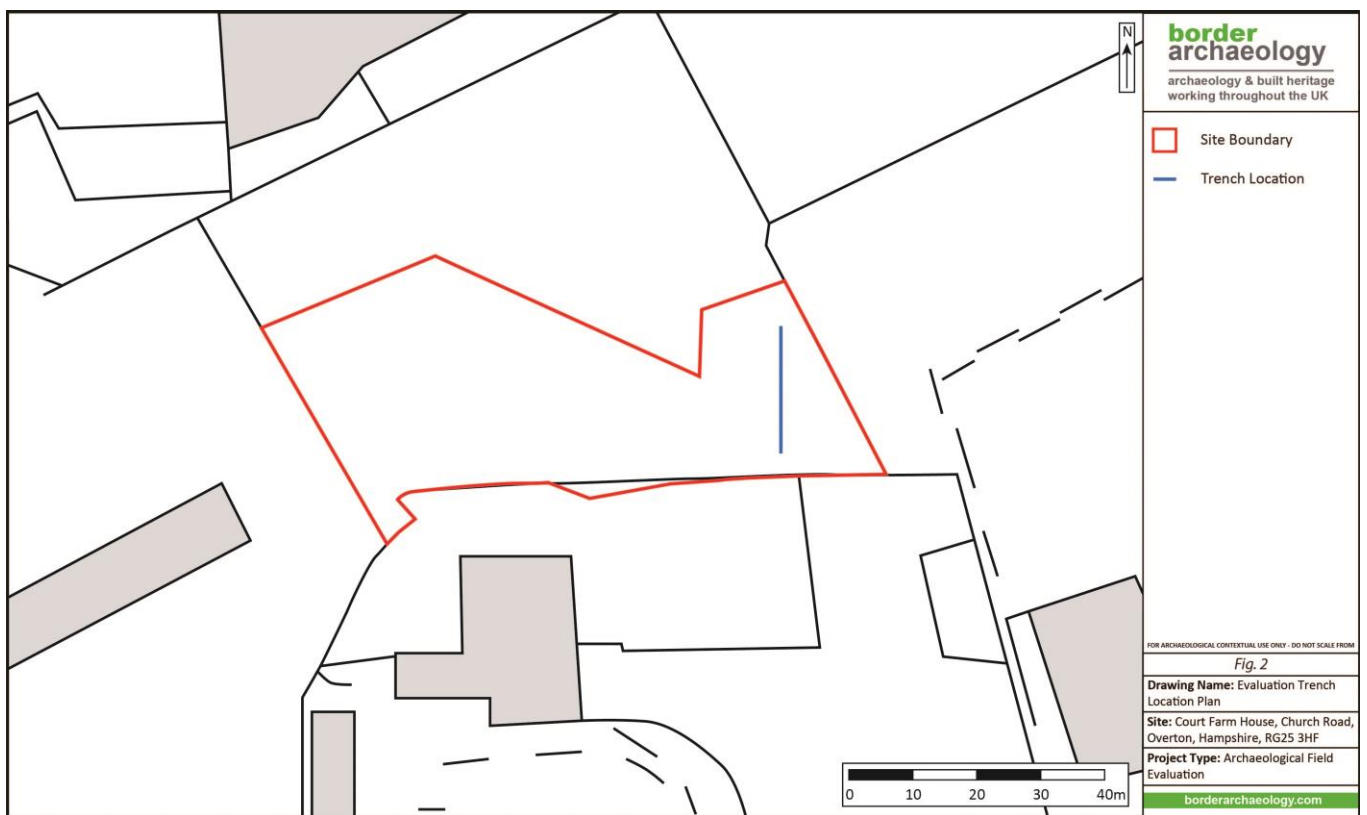
4 Methodology

The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the 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). BA adheres to the *ClfA Code of conduct* (2014).

Whilst one evaluation trench of 30m × 1.8m and two of 20m × 1.8m were originally proposed, representing a 5% sample of the site area, the reduced scope of the development limited the evaluation area to a single 20m × 1.8m trench (formerly Trench 003) (fig. 2).

Trenching was opened using a machine and wide un-toothed bucket operating under archaeological supervision.

Undifferentiated topsoil and made-ground were removed under archaeological supervision down to a buried soil horizon (003004). Overlying deposits were routinely checked during removal for the collection and recording of any significant finds, no such finds being made. The trench faces were cleaned by hand examined and recorded.



4.1 Palaeoenvironmental/palaeoeconomic sampling

No samples were taken, as no archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

5 Tabulated Results

Trench No.	Context No	Type	F/B	F/O	Description	Interpretation	Finds	Sample No	Date
003	(003001)	Deposit.	-	-	Loosely compacted dark greyish-brown clayey silt with a high organic component; infrequent small stones; 0.16-0.21m deep.	Topsoil.	-	-	Modern.
	(003002)	Deposit.	-	-	Firmly compacted dark grey stony silty clay and mixed demolition rubble; c.0.29m thick.	Made ground.	Mixed demolition; not retained.	-	Post-medieval.
	(003003)	Deposit.	-	-	Loosely compacted light grey chalk with flint and rubble; c.0.41m thick.	Made ground.	-	-	Post-medieval.
	(003004)	Deposit.	-	-	Loosely compacted dark greyish-brown silty clay; frequent stones; c.0.25m thick.	Buried soil horizon.	CBM, animal bone, scissors.	-	Post-medieval.
	(003005)	Deposit.	-	-	Loosely compacted light grey malm/degraded clayey chalk; c.0.18m thick.	Nonagricultural subsoil.	-	-	Post-medieval.
	(003006)	Deposit.	-	-	Chalk and flint bedrock.	Natural chalk geology.	-	-	-

6 Discussion

The topsoil (003001) sealed a series of made-ground deposits, comprising demolition rubble (003002) and stone rubble (003003). The earliest made-ground deposit (003003) was seen to overlie a buried soil horizon (003004) at a depth of c.0.80m, this comprising loose dark greyish-brown silty clay containing animal bone, ceramic building materials and a pair of post-medieval jointed scissors. This, in turn, sealed an earlier, non-agricultural subsoil (003005), formed of malm (degraded clayey chalk) above the geological chalk sub-strata (003006).

The made-ground deposits, (003003) and later (003002), sealing the buried soil horizon (003004) (*Plate 2*) reflect the development of the site during the later post-medieval and modern periods, the made-ground likely representing demolition material from agricultural structures formerly occupying the site.



Plate 1: View N of trench

Faunal remains recovered from post-medieval buried soil (003004) largely comprised cattle bone representing a single animal aged approximately 3.5 years at death with sheep/goat represented by a single adult radius. No butchery marks were present on any of the remains and the material has very little interpretative value beyond the suggestion that it probably represents domestic waste.



Plate 2: View E showing W-facing trench section

7 Conclusion

In spite of the site lying within an Area of High Archaeological Importance and a wider landscape of significant archaeological potential for multi-period activity, no evidence dating earlier than the later post-medieval period was encountered. However, it is clear that the site has been subject to considerable disturbance resulting from previous land-use and from demolition activity associated with the removal of former agricultural structures.

In view of the very limited results, therefore, the programme of work offers no potential to address any of the regional, county or local research priorities, as set out in the WSI.

8 Copyright

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10 Appendix: Faunal Remains

Chris Faine
Border Archaeology

10.1 Introduction

1kg of faunal material was recovered from the Archaeological Field Evaluation carried out at Court Farm House yielding seven countable bones (see below). A further eight bones were classed as 'large or small-sized mammal', with seven fragments being unidentifiable. Only identifiable fragments are considered in the table below.

Faunal remains were recovered from post-medieval buried soil (003004). The bones have been washed and bagged by context and are stored at the Border Archaeology Office Milton Keynes.

10.2 Methodology

All data was initially recorded using a specially written MS Access database. Bones were recorded using a version of the criteria described in Davis (1992) and Albarella & Davis (1994). The entire identifiable assemblage was quantified in terms of number of individual fragments (NISP) and number of individuals (MNI).

10.3 The Assemblage

Table 1 shows the assemblage in its entirety. The majority (NISP: 6) consisted of cattle remains, in the form of femora, radii and tibiae of a single animal aged around 3.5 years of age at death. Sheep/goat is the only other taxon present in the form a single adult radius. No butchery was observed on any specimen.

Species	NISP	NISP %	MNI	MNI %
Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)	6	76	1	50
Sheep/Goat (<i>Ovis/Capra</i>)	1	14	1	50
Total:	7	100	2	100

Table 1: Species distribution for the assemblage

10.4 Conclusions

Due to the fragmentary nature of the assemblage no further conclusions can be drawn.

10.5 Bibliography

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