

Archaeological Evaluation Report

**LAND OFF
SHERBOURNE
AVENUE (WREXHAM
ROAD)**

For Stewart Milne Homes (North West England)

Matthew Williams MA MCIfA

L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Evaluation Report

LAND OFF SHERBOURNE AVENUE

Client: Stewart Milne Homes (North West England)

Local Authority: Cheshire West and Chester

NGR: 339845, 364020

Planning App: Pre-application

Author(s): M. Williams

Doc Ref: LPI850M-AER-v1.1

Site Code: I850M

Date: January 16

L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

A trading name of L - P : Heritage LLP

The Pump House | Coton Hill | Shrewsbury, SY1 2DP | +44 [0]1743 361552 | marches@lparchaeology.com

www.lparchaeology.com

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Abstract

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land off Sherbourne Avenue, Wrexham. The main aim of the work was to identify any features that may be associated with Roman field systems. The site has surviving Medieval ridge and furrow earthworks.

Four trenches were excavated. No archaeological features were noted other than the ridge and furrow. The deposits consisted of clay subsoil overlain by a humic topsoil.

The finds assemblage comprised several Post Medieval domestic sherds and one sherd of abraded Medieval pottery.

No significant archaeological features were noted. The profile of the ridge and furrow has been recorded by the topographical survey and in section. Given the negative results, no further archaeological work is recommended.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document has been prepared by Matthew Williams of L - P : Archaeology on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes. The fieldwork was carried out by Matthew Williams, Chris Matthews and Mike Castle of L – P : Archaeology on 15th December 2015. The work was carried out in accordance with a Method Statement prepared by Matthew Williams and agreed with the client and Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC).
- 1.2. Planning consent has not yet been granted for the site, the application reference is 12/03663/FUL.
- 1.3. The site is located on the south side of the City of Chester on the west side of the A483 (NGR339845, 364020). It is about 1.4km from the River Dee which lies to the east and north. The historic core of Chester is 2km to the north although modern development extends to the northern site boundary. The site is bounded to the north by modern housing development and the east by the A483 (Wrexham Road). There are open fields to the south and west (FIGURE 2).
- 1.4. The site consists of a single field which was rough pasture during the time of the evaluation. The southern part of the site was very wet and appeared to be permanently waterlogged.
- 1.5. The bedrock geology is Kinerton Sandstone formation. The superficial geology is Devensian till deposits (BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY 2015).

2. Archaeological and Historic Background

- 2.1.1. There is little evidence for prehistoric activity in the area. During the Roman period the site was within the agricultural hinterland and a Romano-British farmstead was recently discovered at Chester Business Park, 1km south of the site (WILLIAMS 2015).
- 2.1.2. The west side of the site follows the ancient boundary of the liberties of Chester known as the 'Great Ditch'. This remains as an open and wet ditch.
- 2.1.3. Relict ridge and furrow earthworks (the result of Medieval ploughing) is visible running east west across the site which suggests the site has not been ploughed since the Medieval or Early Post Medieval period.
- 2.1.4. The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation records the fields within the site as 'Regular Ancient Field Systems'. These fields are relatively small and have straight boundaries. They often contain marl pits which was dug and spread on the land to aid fertility (EDWARDS 2007).

3. Aims

3.1. The general aim of the evaluation as stated in the WSI was to assess the nature, character, extent and significance of archaeological deposits within the site. The specific aim of the evaluation was to identify ditches that may be associated with Roman field systems.

4. Methodology

4.1. The trenches were set out using GPS in the locations agreed in the Method Statement. Four trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.60m BGL (FIGURE 1).

4.2. Topsoil and modern deposits were removed by machine fitted with a toothless bucket. Archaeological deposits were hand cleaned and recorded in section. A full description of the methodology employed is given in the WSI.

4.3. No environmental samples were taken.

5. Results

5.1. Results are described by trench. Deposit numbers are given in (parentheses). In all trenches the topsoil was a loose, dark brown humic loam, the subsoil was a mid brown grey clay loam with very occasional charcoal flecks and brick fragments. The natural deposits were mid yellow brown clay with occasional gravel layers. Trench 2 is shown as an example in PLATE 1.

TRENCH 1

5.1.1. Trench 1 was at the east side of the site (FIGURE 2). It measured 25m long and 1.6m wide. Natural clay deposits (103) were seen at 19.05m OD, it was overlain by 0.18m of subsoil (102) and 0.13m topsoil (101). The subsoil was slightly thicker at the sides of the furrow ditches. A 4m representative section is shown in FIGURE 3 and PLATE 2.

TRENCH 2

5.1.2. Trench 2 was at the south side of the site (FIGURE 2). It measured 25m long and 1.6m wide. Natural clay (203) was at 18.56m OD, it was overlain by 0.18m of subsoil (202) and 0.17m of topsoil (201). The trench was parallel with the ridge and furrow and therefore the ridges were not visible in profile.

TRENCH 3

5.1.3. Trench 3 was at the west side of the site (FIGURE 2). It measured 25m long and 1.6m wide. natural clay (303) was at 18.63m OD, it was overlain by 0.20m of subsoil (302) and 0.10m of topsoil (301). Trench 3 flooded soon after it was recorded.

TRENCH 4

5.1.4. Trench 4 was at the north side of the site (FIGURE 2). It measured 25m long and 1.6m wide. Natural clay (403) was at 18.60m OD, it was overlain by 0.25m of subsoil (402) and 0.35m of topsoil (401).

6. Finds

6.1.1. All finds were from the topsoil, they are listed below in (TABLE 1).

CONTEXT	NOTES	PERIOD
101	One sherd of large orange fabric glazed storage jar	19 th c.
201	Four short fragments of clay pipe. Large central bore.	18 th /19 th c.
201	Two shreds of large dark brown glazed storage jar	19 th /20 th c.
301	One sherd of small brown glazed storage jar,	19 th c.
301	One sherd of small orange glazed dish rim,	18 th /19 th c.
301	One body sherd of porcelain	18 th /19 th c.
301	Body sherd of wide dish or jar. No glaze. Orange oxidized surfaces. Abraded.	Medieval

Table 1 - Artefacts recovered by context

6.2. The Post Medieval pottery dates from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The Medieval sherd has no base or rim section and is therefore difficult to date beyond the Medieval period.

6.3. The Post Medieval pottery suggest occasional refuse deposits within the field. The single sherd of Medieval pottery is very abraded and may derive from manuring the fields (spreading household and stable waste to fertilize the soil).

7. Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1.1. No archaeological features other than the ridge and furrow were noted in any trenches. There was no evidence for Roman field systems.
- 7.1.2. The ridge and furrow indicates that the site was ploughed during the Medieval period, and the single sherd of Medieval pottery suggests the site was probably also manured.
- 7.1.3. No significant archaeological features were noted during the evaluation. No further work is recommended.

8. Archive

8.1. The paper archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x Drawing Register
- ◆ 3 x Drawing Film
- ◆ 1 x Photographic Register
- ◆ 1 x Context Register
- ◆ 12 Context sheets

8.2. The finds archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x box artefacts as described in Section 5 (all materials).

8.3. The archive is to be deposited with the Grosvenor Museum.

SOURCES CONSULTED

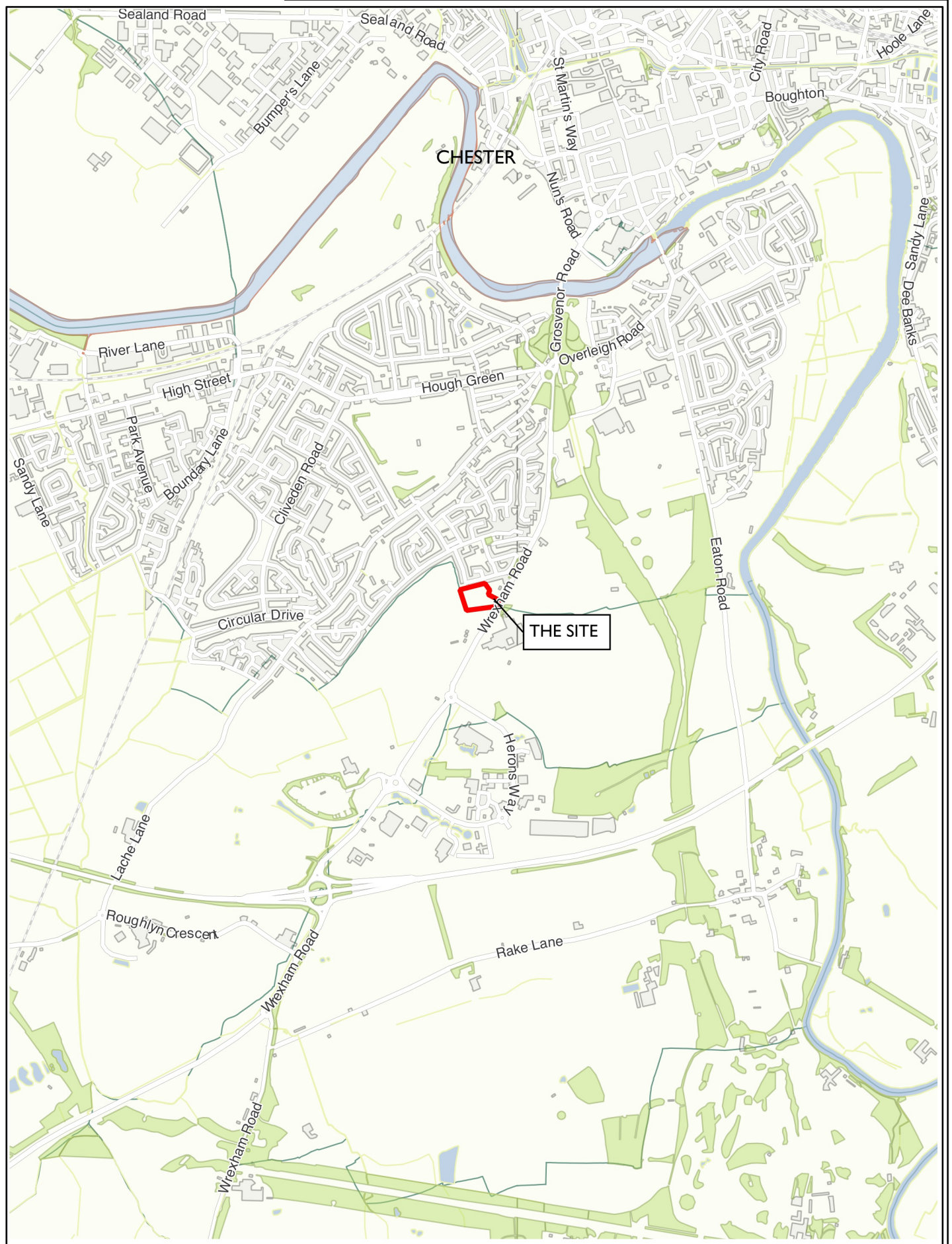
BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, 2015. 'ONSHORE GEOINDEX'. WWW.BGS.AC.UK/GEOINDEX.

EDWARDS, R., 2007. 'The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation'.

WILLIAMS, M., 2015. *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment for Wrexham Road, Chester*. L - P :
Archaeology.

FIGURES

FIGURE 1 // Site Location - General



0 1000 m



PROJECT // 1850M - Wrexham Road, Chester

DESCRIPTION // Site Location

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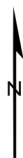
DOC REF: LPI850M-AER-v1

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FIGURE 2 // Trench locations



0 75 m



PROJECT // 1850M - Wrexham Road, Chester

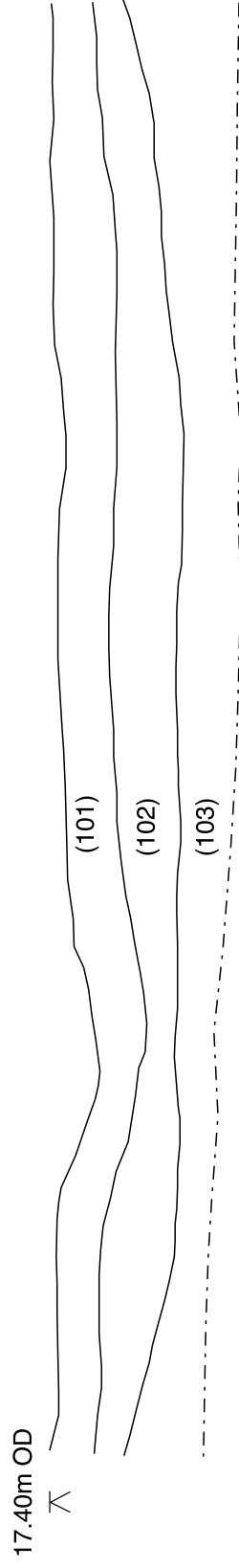
DESCRIPTION // Trench locations

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FIGURE 3 // Trench 1 section



Scale 1:20 @ A4



PROJECT // 1850M - Wrexham Road, Chester

DESCRIPTION // West facing trench 1 section

DOC REF: LP1850M-AER-v1

PLATES



Plate 1 - Trench 2 looking west. 1m scale.



Plate 2 - Trench 1 east facing section. 1m scale.

OASIS FORM

APPENDIX I

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: Iparchae1-235938

Project details

Project name	Land off Sherbourne Avenue, Chester
Short description of the project	Four no. 25m trench rural evaluation to identify Roman field systems. No features recorded.
Project dates	Start: 15-12-2015 End: 15-12-2015
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	1850M - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Housing estate
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER CHESTER Land off Sherbourne Road
Postcode	CH4 7QQ
Study area	1.6 Hectares
Site coordinates	SJ 398 640 53.169416779703 -2.900656070828 53 10 09 N 002 54 02 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 18.56m Max: 19.05m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	L - P : Archaeology
Project brief originator	No brief

Project design originator	L - P : Archaeology
Project director/manager	Matthew Williams
Project supervisor	Matthew Williams
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Stewart Milne Homes

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cheshire Museum Service
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Cheshire Museum Service
Paper Contents	"Ceramics", "Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Report", "Section"

Entered by	Matthew Williams (m.williams@lparchaeology.com)
Entered on	4 January 2016

OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

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