

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT:
BERGEN HOUSE, SECOND DRIFT, WOTHORPE, PETERBROUGH

Planning Reference: 13/00923/FUL
NGR: TF 0267 0588
AAL Site Code: WOBH 14
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-173177



Report prepared for Charleswood Homes

By
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Report Number AAL2014020

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Allenarchaeology



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Executive Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Charleswood Homes to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a replacement dwelling on land on Bergen House, Second Drift, Wothorpe, Peterborough.
- There is limited evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity in the vicinity of the site. It is located to the north of the medieval core of Wothorpe, where substantial settlement earthworks survive, as well as the remains of the post-medieval manor of Wothorpe Towers.
- The watching brief uncovered no artefacts, features or deposits of archaeological significance within the house plot and the development site had most likely suffered extensive horizontal truncation during earlier development work at the site.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by Charleswood Homes to undertake an archaeological watching brief to satisfy a planning condition for the construction of a new dwelling Bergen House, Second Drift, Wothorpe, Peterborough.
- 1.2 The fieldwork, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*' (IfA 1994, revised 2001 and 2008), English Heritage documents '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (English Heritage 2006) and '*Management of Archaeological Projects*' (English Heritage 1991). All appropriate English Heritage guidelines on archaeological practice were followed (www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740) in addition to the methodology outlined in a specification prepared by this company (AAL 2013).
- 1.3 The documentary archive will be submitted to Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery within six months of the completion of the fieldwork.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Wothorpe is located in the administrative district of Peterborough City Council, approximately 17.5km west-northwest of central Peterborough and 1km south of central Stamford (Figure 1). The site is located to the southwest of Second Drift, and centres on NGR TF 0267 0588. (Figure 2).
- 2.2 The site is located on a bedrock geology of Upper Lias Clay, with no superficial geology recorded (British Geological Survey 1978).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 Full planning permission has been granted for '*demolition of existing dwelling and construction of a five bed dwelling*' (Planning Application Reference 13/00923/FUL). The permission was granted subject to conditions, including the undertaking of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during all associated groundworks. This report details the results of the archaeological work.
- 3.2 This approach is consistent with the guidelines that are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012).

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 Evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity in the vicinity of the site is sparse, although the line of Ermine Street, one of the main thoroughfares in Roman Britain, runs c.500m north of the site (PHER Reference 50576). A slight earthwork aligned northwest to southeast appears to define the line of the road running to a crossing over the River Welland. Elsewhere the line of the road is believed to define the parish boundary between Wothorpe and Barnack. The only other find of this date in the vicinity of the site is a single Roman coin found c.600m east of the current site (PHER Reference 00009).

- 4.2 There is no physical evidence for archaeological activity of Anglo-Saxon date, although some form of settlement is likely to have existed as Wothorpe is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. There were three land holdings listed at the time, in the ownership of the abbott of Peterborough Abbey, Crowland Abbey and Countess Judith (Williams and Martin 2002). The total population of these estates was twenty villagers of varying status, along with their dependents, and a mill was also recorded among the holdings of Crowland Abbey, probably located on the River Welland. The place name comprises Old English and Old Norse elements, meaning 'thicket farm/outlying settlement' (<http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/map/place/Huntingdonshire/Wothorpe>).
- 4.3 The current site is situated to the north of the historic medieval core of the settlement, centred to the south of the A1. Many earthworks of the medieval settlement survive beyond the site, including crofts, tofts, house platforms and lanes, as well as formal gardens associated with the later Wothorpe Towers (PHER Reference 51249). The village appears to have gradually declined during the medieval period, and the parish church was pulled down in 1585. A map of 1615 shows only 8 or 9 houses in the historic core of the village, and a later settlement focus developed in the area of the current site in the 19th century (PHER Reference 00005). There was a Benedictine nunnery established in Wothorpe prior to 1300, the exact site of which is unknown. It was a poor establishment, with only one nun after the Black Death in the mid 14th century (PHER Reference 00007).
- 4.4 The estate was acquired after Dissolution in 1540 by the Cecil family, and it is believed that this may have occasioned further depopulation of the parish. In 1600, Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter built a house, known as Wothorpe Towers in the area of the former medieval village (PHER Reference 00003). It is largely ruinous, having been mostly dismantled in 1759, although the four large four storey ashlar towers that give the building its name still survive. Between the four towers are the remains of a three storey block. It is a Grade I Listed Building and a Scheduled Monument. A recent geophysical survey adjacent to the building indicated evidence for the survival of a zig-zag water feature shown on a map of 1615, with associated terrace walls (PHER Reference 53586).
- 4.5 To the west of the ruins of Wothorpe Towers is Wothorpe Farm, a 17th century farmhouse of coursed ashlar rubble. This too is largely derelict, and has 18th century and 19th century additions. It sits within a U-shaped farm complex, which also includes a 19th century bakehouse at the south-east end of the house, a large 17th century barn to the north, two 18th century barns, and walled garden with ornamented gateway, all of which are Grade II Listed.
- 4.6 A single archaeological intervention is recorded in the vicinity of the site. A watching brief at Capmarleo, c.450m to the east-northeast of the site recorded an undated ditch, and a tile and fragment of kiln furniture, both of post-medieval date, were recovered from the site (PHER Reference 51264).

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 Prior to commencement of the groundworks, the existing dwelling on the site was demolished and the area stripped of topsoil. The watching brief entailed the monitoring of foundations for the new dwelling and was undertaken by over a single day, on 17th February 2014. The groundworks were undertaken using a tracked excavator with a 0.6m wide toothless bucket, and were monitored at all times by the author. Due to the truncation evident on the site and the absence of archaeological features and deposits, it

was agreed with the Archaeologist at Peterborough City Council that no further monitoring would be necessary.

- 5.2 During the groundworks all exposed plan and section surfaces were inspected for archaeological features and deposits and to determine the stratigraphic sequence. Photography formed an integral part of the site recording methodology and a selection of images is reproduced in this report.
- 5.3 Standard AAL context recording sheets were used to record all context information (e.g. deposits, archaeological features, stratigraphic relationships).

6.0 Results

- 6.1 The footings were excavated to a depth of 1.5m and were 0.6m wide. The uppermost deposit encountered was a 0.2m thick layer of dark grey brown topsoil, 100, which partially extended into the southern part of the monitored area, having been completely truncated elsewhere. It overlay a 0.24m thick layer of mid orangey brown silty clay subsoil, 101, which again only extended across the southern part of the monitored area. The subsoil sealed a 0.5m thick natural geological layer which consisted of a light to mid blue grey silty clay 102, and formed the uppermost of a sequence of geological layers, 103-107, which comprised silty clays ranging in colour from light yellowish brown to dark blueish grey.



Plate 1: General view of the site, looking southeast



Plate 2: Northwest facing section. Scales are 1m

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1 The stratigraphic sequence comprised six distinct layers of natural geology, overlain by topsoil and subsoil.
- 7.2 The watching brief indicated that the development area had been heavily truncated, probably as a result of construction and demolition of an earlier property at the site. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered within the monitored footings.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 8.1 The archaeological watching brief methodology was appropriate to the nature and extent of the proposed development. It has demonstrated that the development has had a negligible impact upon the archaeological resource.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Charleswood Homes for this commission, and to the contractors for their cooperation during the site works.

10.0 References

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Appendix 1: Context Summary List

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Firm dark greyish brown silty clay. Seals 101	Topsoil
101	Layer	Firm mid orangey brown silty clay. Seals 102, sealed by 100	Subsoil
102	Layer	Firm and sticky light to mid blueish grey silty clay. Seals 103, sealed by 101	Natural Geology
103	Layer	Soft and sticky light yellowish brown silty clay. Seals 104, sealed by 102	Natural Geology
104	Layer	Friable greyish brown with yellowish orange mottling silty clay. Seals 105, sealed by 103	Natural Geology
105	Layer	Firm light greyish blue with yellow laminations silty clay. Seals 106, sealed by 104	Natural Geology
106	Layer	Friable greyish brown with yellowish orange mottling silty clay. Seals 107, sealed by 105	Natural Geology
107	Layer	Very firm to hard dark blueish grey silty clay, with frequent small to large gypsum crystals formed within it. Sealed by 106	Natural Geology

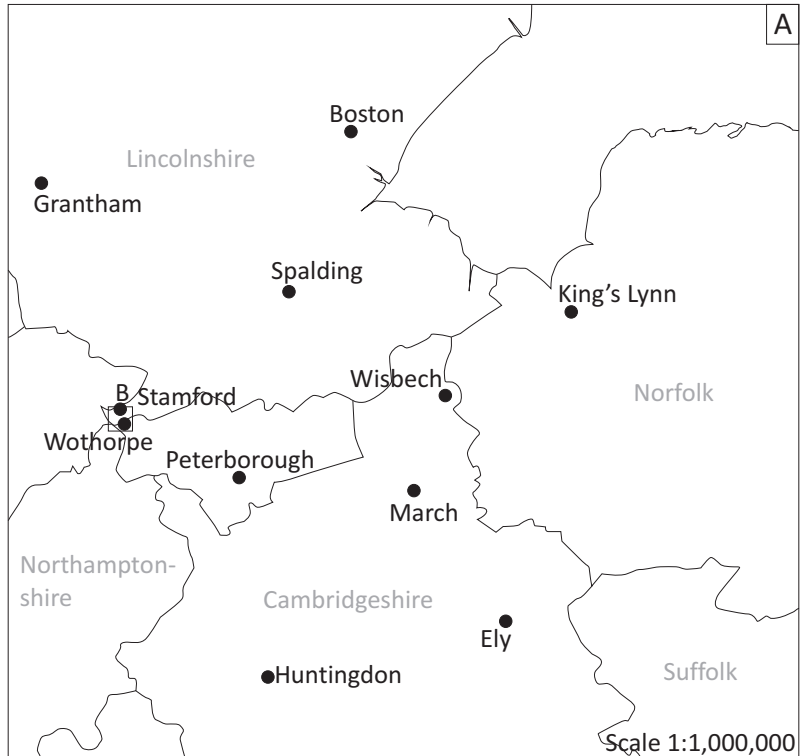
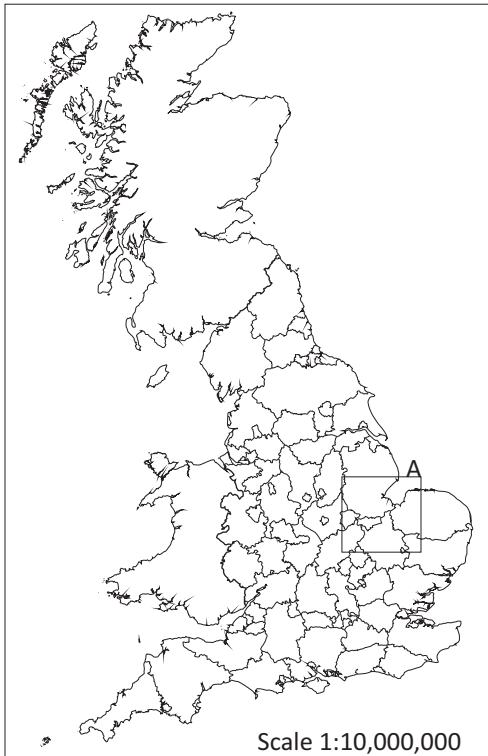


Figure 1: Site location outlined in red

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Site Code	WOBH 14
Scales	1:10,000,000 1:1,000,000 1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	A Chapman
Date	04/03/2014



Key

— Limit of development area

Site Code	WOBH 14
Scale	1:750 @ A4
Drawn By	A Chapman
Date	21/02/14

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Northwest Facing Section

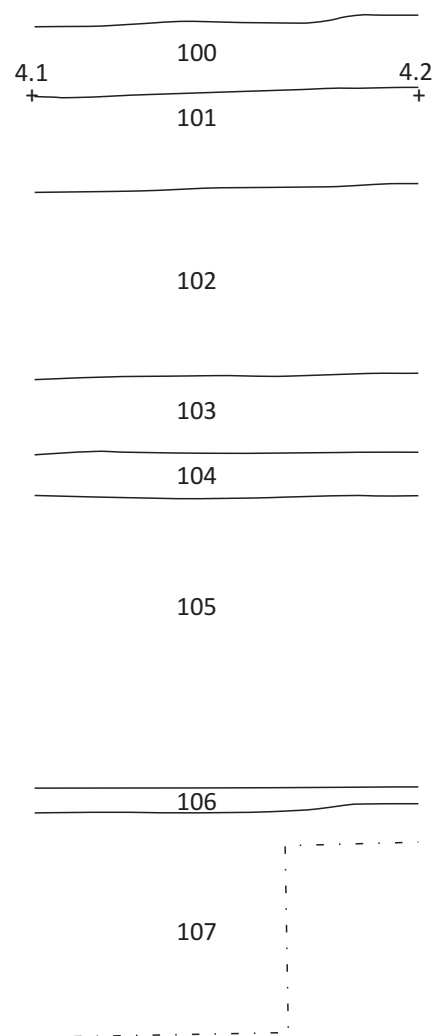


Figure 4: Northwest facing representative section

Site Code	WOBH 14
Scale	1:20 @ A4
Drawn by	A Chapman
Date	04/03/2014

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