

**Gower House, 1 Place Road  
Melksham  
Wiltshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

*for*

**Dr J Tromp**


CA Project: 3335  
CA Report: 11132

June 2011

Gower House, 1 Place Road  
Melksham  
Wiltshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: 3335  
CA Report: 11132

prepared by	Alexandra Wilkinson, Project Supervisor
date	6 June 2011
checked by	Richard Young, Project Manager
date	8 June 2011
approved by	Simon Cox, Fieldwork Manager
signed	
date	9 June 2011
issue	01

*This report is confidential to the client. Cotswold Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability to any third party to whom this report, or any part of it, is made known. Any such party relies upon this report entirely at their own risk. No part of this report may be reproduced by any means without permission.*

## CONTENTS

SUMMARY .....	2
1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
2. RESULTS (FIG. 2) .....	5
3. DISCUSSION.....	5
4. CA PROJECT TEAM .....	5
5. REFERENCES .....	6
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS .....	7
APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM.....	8

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 The site, showing location of groundworks (1:250)



## SUMMARY

**Project Name:** Gower House, 1 Place Road  
**Location:** Melksham, Wiltshire  
**NGR:** ST 9043 6369  
**Type:** Watching Brief  
**Date:** 17-18 May 2011  
**Planning Reference:** W/10/03448/FUL  
**Location of Archive:** To be deposited with Wiltshire Heritage Museum  
**Site Code:** GOW11

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a garage and conservatory at Gower House, 1 Place Road, Melksham, Wiltshire.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In May 2011 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Dr J Tromp at Gower House, 1 Place Road, Melksham, Wiltshire (centred on NGR: ST 9043 6369; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent for the construction of a garage and conservatory granted by Wiltshire Council (WC ref: W/10/03448/FUL). The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2011) and approved by Mr David Vaughan, Assistant County Archaeologist, WC. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA 2008), the *Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Wiltshire* (Wiltshire County Council 1995), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

### **The site**

- 1.3 The development enclosed an area of approximately 0.1ha, and comprised a property which was formerly a doctor's surgery. The drift geology comprises first terrace river gravel of the Pleistocene and recent era, this overlies the solid geology comprising Oxford Clay of the Upper Jurassic era (BGS 2011). Both river gravels and Oxford Clay were encountered on site.

### **Archaeological background**

- 1.4 The site lies within the Medieval core of Melchesa which was first recorded in the 1086 Domesday Survey. Melksham was a secular manor held by the crown in 1086 until the mid 13th century. Gower House stands on the site of the Capital Manor of Melksham. The existence of this estate can be traced back to the Saxon period. However the presence of a manor house on this site is only certain from the 16th century. This earlier manor house was later replaced by Place House. Place House faced the market place on the site now occupied by the Place Road junction with the

High Street. In 1864 the house was demolished as it had gradually fallen derelict (WCC 2004 and Wiltshire HER).

- 1.5 In the wider area an undated burial (HER ref: ST96SW550) was identified to the south-east of St. Michaels church (approximately 120m west of the site) during gravel extraction. Due to the close proximity to the church and its N-S alignment this may suggest the continuity of the area from pre-Christian times as a sacred/burial site. In addition, at 2 Church Walk, approximately 175m north-east of site, two fragments of Romano-British pottery (HER ref: ST96SW304) were discovered, and during the construction of the bypass and new road bridges 450m to the north-west of the site Palaeolithic flint (HER ref: ST86SE001), Neolithic pottery (HER ref: ST96SW100), a number of Bronze Age bronze weapons (HER ref: ST96SW150) and Romano-British pottery fragments (HER ref: ST96SW301) were identified.

### ***Methodology***

- 1.6 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2011). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the excavation of foundation trenches for the new walls of the garage (Fig. 2). No foundations were necessary for the construction of the conservatory and no new service trenches were required.
- 1.7 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.8 The archive from the watching brief, currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble, will be deposited with Wiltshire Heritage Museum. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.



## **2. RESULTS (FIG. 2)**

- 2.1 The natural geological substrate 104, 105 and 111, consisting of river terrace gravels and blue grey clays was revealed at an average depth of 1.1m below present ground level. This was overlain by modern make-up deposits 103, 109, 110 and 114, consisting of grey brown sandy clays and gravel, with frequent limestone rubble and brick inclusions, up to 1.05m in thickness. On the northern edge of site make-up deposit 103 was truncated by cut 107 for a modern boundary wall which contained backfill deposit, 108. This was sealed by buried topsoil, 102, and sand, 106. In the east facing section of the trench on the western edge of site the make-up deposit 103 was sealed by a compact limestone powder and gravel layer, 113, which is probably a former modern yard surface belonging to the adjacent property. It in turn was sealed by topsoil, 112. Over the remaining area all deposits were sealed by two layers of tarmac, 100 and 101.
- 2.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered. The modern material was not retained.

## **3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area, the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that structural remains associated with the Capital Manor of Melksham either do not extend as far as or were not exposed by the development, or that they may have been removed during the construction of the current property.

## **4. CA PROJECT TEAM**

Fieldwork was undertaken by Charlotte Haines. The report was written by Alexandra Wilkinson. The illustrations were prepared by Peter Moore. The archive has been compiled by Charlotte Haines, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

## 5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2010 *Geology of Britain Viewer 1:50,000*  
[http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html) accessed 23 May  
2011

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2011 *Gower House, 1 Place Road, Melksham, Wiltshire: Written  
Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Wiltshire County Council (2004) *The Archaeology of Wiltshire Towns: An Extensive Urban  
Survey, Melksham.*





**APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

## Trench 1

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Tarmac			0.06	
101	Layer	Loose tarmac			0.06	
102	Layer	Buried topsoil: Dark grey brown sandy silty clay			0.26	
103	Layer	Made ground: Green grey clay, frequent limestone rubble, occasional lenses of brick and limestone rubble			1.05	
104	Layer	Natural: Patches of orange yellow sand and river gravel				
105	Layer	Natural: Orange yellow/Dark grey blue clay				
106	Layer	Levelling deposit below 101: Orange yellow sand			0.15	
107	Cut	Cut for standing garden wall	>8	0.55	1	
108	Fill	Fill of 107: Dark brown sandy clay with frequent limestone rubble				
109	Layer	Make-up deposit: Dirty yellow brown clay and gravel, only present in NW corner of site			0.3	
110	Layer	Make-up deposit: Dark blue grey clay with frequent charcoal			0.25	
111	Layer	Natural: Dark blue grey clay				
112	Layer	Topsoil: Mid brown sandy silty clay			0.4	
113	Layer	Former yard surface: Compact limestone powder and gravel			0.15	
114	Layer	Make-up: Grey brown silty sandy clay			0.4	

**APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Gower House, 1 Place Road, Melksham, Wiltshire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a garage and conservatory at Gower House, 1 Place Road, Melksham, Wiltshire. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.	
Project dates	17-18 May 2011	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Gower House, 1 Place Road, Melksham, Wiltshire	
Study area	0.1ha	
Site co-ordinates	ST 9043 6369	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Wiltshire Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Charlotte Haines	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	none	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	none	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	n/a	n/a
Paper	Wiltshire Heritage Museum	Trench Sheets, photographic registers
Digital	Wiltshire Heritage Museum	Digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2011 <i>Gower House, 1 Place Road, Melksham, Wiltshire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report <b>11132</b>		



Cotswold Archaeology  
 t 01285 771022  
 f 01285 771033  
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk  
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Gower House, Place Road, Melksham  
 Wiltshire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

Reproduced from the 2007 Ordnance Survey Explorer map with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright Cotswold Archaeological Trust 100002109

PROJECT NO.	3335	DATE	1-06-2011	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY	PJM	REVISION	00	1
APPROVED BY	PJM	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	



- site
- observed groundworks



**Cotswold Archaeology**  
 t 01285 771022  
 f 01285 771033  
 w [www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)  
 e [enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk)

**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Gower House, Place Road, Melksham  
 Wiltshire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site showing observed groundworks

