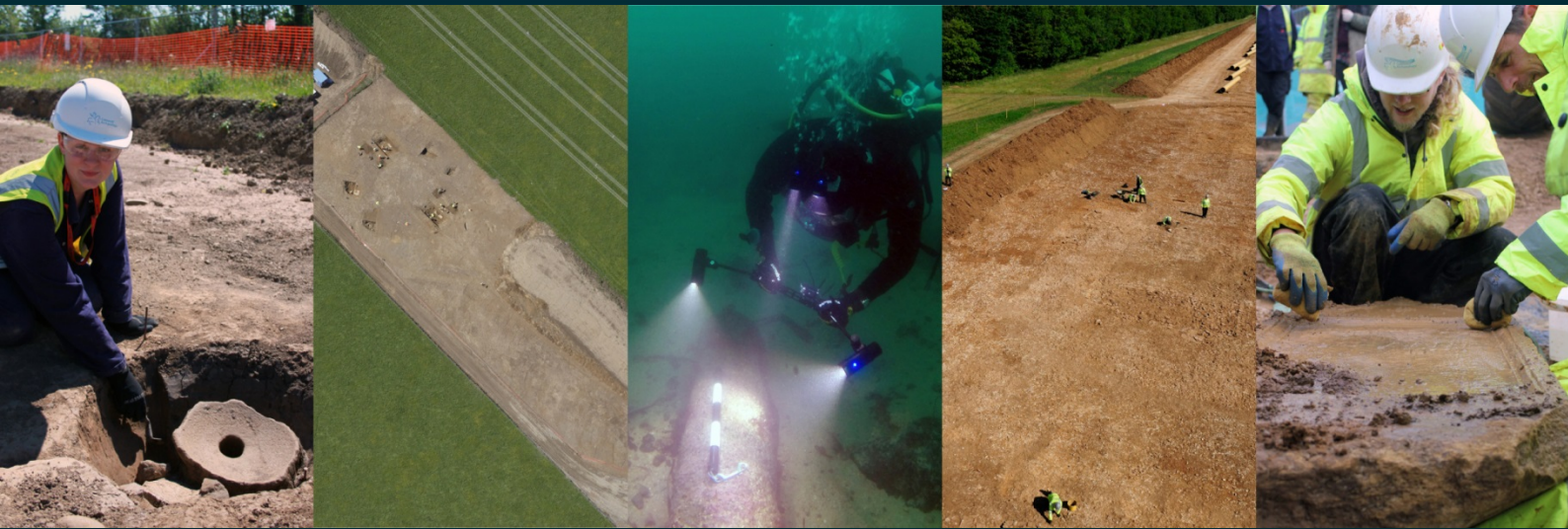


Land to the East of Thame Park Road Thame Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation



for
Bellway Homes Limited

CA Project: 770291
CA Report: 15835

March 2016



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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Land to the East of Thame Park Road, Thame
Location:	Thame, Oxfordshire
NGR:	471525, 204819
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	23-25 November 2015, 29 February 2016
Planning Reference:	P14/S1619/O
Location of Archive:	Oxfordshire Museum Service
Site Code:	THP15

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in two phases (November 2015 and February 2016) by Cotswold Archaeology on land to the east of Thame Park Road, Thame, Oxfordshire, on behalf of Bellway Homes. Seventeen trenches were excavated out of the equating to a 2% sample of the development site.

The trenches were not targeted on any geophysical anomalies but were distributed across the proposed development in order to assess the archaeological potential across as wide an area as possible. The seventeen trenches excavated revealed no significant archaeological features, deposits or finds.

Trenches 6, 9, 13 and 17 contained post-medieval furrows but no finds of archaeological interest were recovered.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In November 2015 and February 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Bellway Homes Limited at Land to the East of Thame Park Road, Thame, Oxfordshire (centred on NGR: 471525, 204819; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken in order to fulfil a condition of the Part Outline Planning Permission/Part Full Hybrid Application (P14/S1619/O) that had been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), for a development of up to 187 new dwellings (including up to 40% affordable housing) with vehicular access from Wenman Road, structural planting and landscaping, informal and formal open space including retained agricultural land, children's' play space, allotments, surface water attenuation, burial space and ancillary works; comprising a full planning application for element A of 79 dwellings and element B which seeks Outline Planning permission for up to 108 dwellings. In respect of the Outline element B only principal access to the highway is sought for approval and all other matters are reserved for determination at a later date. An archaeological condition requires the following to be undertaken:

Condition 21

Prior to any demolition on the site and the commencement of the development and following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation, a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The programme of work shall include all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

To Safeguard the identification, recording, analysis and archiving of heritage assets before they are lost and to advance understanding of the heritage assets in their wider context through publication and dissemination of the evidence in accordance with the NPPF (2012)

- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2015) and approved by Richard Oram. The

fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (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 proposed development area is approximately 5.1ha, and comprises agricultural land to the south of Wenham Road and to the east of the Thame Park Road housing development. It is bounded to the south and east by agricultural fields. The site is at a height of approximately 77m above Ordnance Datum (aOD)
- 1.4 The solid geology of the study site comprises mudstone of the Gault Formation, with superficial river terrace deposits.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Iron Age / Roman

- 2.1 An Iron Age/Romano-British settlement is known c. 485m to the east of the site, to the south of Cotemore Wells Farm. The remains comprised pits and ditches and four potential Romano-British inhumations, as well as associated finds of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery. Geophysical survey of the site and surrounding area identified no clear evidence of settlement activity from this period (Stratascan 2013).

Saxon / Medieval

- 2.3 The site lies c.1km south-east of the Saxon and Medieval historic core of the town of Thame and over 800m to the north of the remains of the 12th century Thame Abbey. The potential for Saxon or Medieval activity within the site was therefore considered low.



3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation are to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 In November 2015, the fieldwork comprised the excavation of 15 trenches (30m x 2m), in the locations shown on the attached plan (Figure 2). Two of the trenches were not excavated in November due to permission not being granted to cross a major aviation fuel pipeline which therefore prevented access to the south-east corner of the site. However these trenches were subsequently excavated in February 2016. Trench 2 was re-aligned on the request of the pipeline authorities. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*.
- 4.2 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeo-environmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* and, no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.

- 4.4 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Andover. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the archive will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service. 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.

5. RESULTS (FIGURES 2-6)

- 5.1 No archaeological features or deposits were recorded and the trenches excavated were all archaeologically sterile.
- 5.2 **Trenches 6, 9, 13 and 17** contained post-medieval furrows but no finds of archaeological interest were recovered from them.
- 5.3 The general deposit sequence identified across the site comprised mid-grey/brown friable clay/silt plough-soil averaging 0.25m in depth. The natural geology comprised mid yellow/brown silt/clay with mid blue/grey mottling and was recorded at an average depth of 0.25m bgl, with a minimum depth of 0.22m in **Trench 8** and a maximum of 0.30m in **Trench 11**.

6. THE FINDS

No finds were recovered during the course of the evaluation.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 Despite the sites close proximity to the Cuttle Brook, Thame Abbey and to the medieval town of Thame no archaeological features or deposits were identified during the course of the evaluation.
- 7.2 This may be due to the marginal nature of the land, which may have made it undesirable for the location of any settlement or occupation activity. It may have been possibly used as transient seasonally occupied grazing pasture. The close proximity to a water source (the Cuttle Brook) would have been important for any

grazing animals, while at the same time possibly making the land closer to the river unsuitable for occupation due to its marshy/boggy nature.

- 7.3 The results of the evaluation make it clear that the site is unlikely to contain any significant archaeology and as such has very low potential.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Ray Kennedy, assisted by Jack Marten-Jones and Stephanie Duesing and Adam Howard. The report was written by Ray Kennedy. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Tom Rowley, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Richard Greatorex.

9. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 26
November 2015

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 *Land to the East of Thame Park Road, Thame, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

CgMS (2014) *Site C Thame, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment*

Stratascan (2013) *Thame Site C, Thame, Oxfordshire, Geophysical Survey Report*



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/ thickness (m)
1	100	Layer	Plough soil	Mid brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Rooting from grass throughout.	30	2	0.28
1	101	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-50mm).	30	2	0.13+
2	200	Layer	Plough soil	Mid brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Rooting from grass throughout.	30	2	0.25
2	201	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-50mm).	30	2	0.06+
3	300	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	30.5	2	0.28
3	301	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	30.5	2	0.05+
4	400	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	30.6	2	0.26
4	401	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	30.6	2	0.05+
5	500	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	32	2	0.3
5	501	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	32	2	0.1+
6	600	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	31	2	0.3
6	601	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	31	2	0.1+
7	700	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	30.8	2	0.27
7	701	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	30.8	2	0.04+
8	800	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	30.5	2	0.22
8	801	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	30.5	2	0.11+
9	900	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	31.6	2	0.24

9	901	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	31.6	2	0.06+
10	1000	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	31.2	2	0.27
10	1001	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	31.2	2	0.05+
11	1100	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	35	2	0.3
11	1101	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	35	2	0.06+
12	1200	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	31	2	0.2
12	1201	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	31	2	0.07+
13	1300	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	31	2	0.25
13	1301	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	31	2	0.06+
13	1302	Cut	Furrow	Cut of furrow.	>10	0.45	0.11
13	1303	Fill	Fill of 1302	Fill of furrow 1302.	>10	0.45	0.11
14	1400	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	30.7	2	0.27
14	1401	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	30.7	2	0.04+
15	1500	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	30.5	2	0.25
15	1501	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	30.5	2	0.1+
16	1600	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	33.5	2	0.29
16	1601	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	33.5	2	0.05+
17	1700	Layer	Plough soil	Mid greyish brown clayey silt which is friable and moist. Fine rooting throughout. Grass a top	30.4	2	0.22
17	1701	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowish brown with mid blueish grey mottling. Silty clay which is compact. Moderate amount of sub-angular flint throughout (20mm-70mm).	30.4	2	0.11+
17	1702	Cut	Furrow	Cut of furrow.	>2	1.71	0.18

17	1703	Fill	Fill of 1702	Fill of furrow 1702.	>2	1.71	0.18
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APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project Name	Land to the East of the Thame Park Road, Thame, Oxfordshire
Short description (250 words maximum)	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in November 2015 at land to the east of Thame Park Road, Thame, Oxfordshire, on behalf of Bellway Homes. Fifteen trenches (TR 3-17) were excavated out of the planned seventeen trenches, equating to a 2% sample of the development site. Two trenches (TR1 -2) were not excavated, following consultation with the client, due to an underground service that could not be crossed at the time of the evaluation.</p> <p>The trenches were not targeted on any archaeological anomalies but were distributed across the proposed development in order to assess the archaeological potential across as wide an area as possible. The fifteen trenches excavated revealed no archaeological features, deposits or finds.</p> <p>Trenches 13 and 17 contained post-medieval furrows but no finds of archaeological interest.</p>
Project dates	23-25 November 2015
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Archaeological Evaluation
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	Stratascan (2013) <i>Thame Site C, Thame, Oxfordshire, Geophysical Survey Report</i>
Future work	Unknown
PROJECT LOCATION	
Site Location	Land to the East of the Thame Park Road, Thame, Oxfordshire
Study area (M ² /ha)	5.1ha
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	471525, 204819
PROJECT CREATORS	
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Brief originator	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Manager	Richard Greatorex
Project Supervisor	Ray Kennedy
MONUMENT TYPE	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None

PROJECT ARCHIVES	Oxfordshire Museum Services	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		Context sheets, matrices, planning sheets
Digital		Database, digital photos, Cad survey
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015/16 <i>Land to the East of Thame Park Road, Thame, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 15835		

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