THE RIDINGS
ST GEORGE'S, WORLE
NORTH SOMERSET

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

For

CGMS

on behalf of

JS BLOOR (SWINDON) LTD

CA PROJECT: 2509
CA REPORT: 08021

FEBRUARY 2008

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

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CA PROJECT: 2509
CA REPORT: 08021

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date	28 January 2008
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SUMMARY

Project Name:	The Ridings
Location:	St George's, Worle, North Somerset
NGR:	ST 3736 6292
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	23-28 January 2008
Planning Reference:	07/P/3017/F
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with North Somerset Museum Service
Site Code:	RSG 08

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in January 2008 at the request of CgMs on behalf of JS Bloor (Swindon) Ltd at The Ridings, St George's, Worle. In compliance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation, five trenches were excavated.

One undated and three modern pits were recorded at between 0.72m to 1.23m below present ground level, cut into an underlying alluvial deposit and sealed by modern subsoil, topsoil and made ground.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2008 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation at the request of CgMs, acting on behalf of JS Bloor (Swindon) Ltd at The Ridings, St George's, Worle, North Somerset (centred on NGR: ST 3736 6292; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken in advance of proposed B1 office and residential development (planning ref. 07/P/3017/F).

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2008) and approved by Vince Russett, Development Control Archaeologist, North Somerset Council Planning and Environment Directorate. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2001), and the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991). It was monitored by Vince Russett, including a site visit on 27 January 2008.

The site

1.3 The proposed development area encloses an area of approximately 1.64ha, and comprises an area of grassed land set to the south of a housing development known as The Hedge's at St George's, bounded on its south side by the Bristol to Weston-Super-Mare railway line (Fig. 2). The site lies between 5.85m and 6.16m AOD, with the ground level dropping away to the south-west. The ground level has been raised substantially, with deposits dumped from recent development in the vicinity, by up to 1.23m.

1.4 The underlying geology of the site is recorded as alluvium (IGS 1979). The strata belong to the upper portion of the Somerset Levels formation (Haslett et al 2001), which is correlated with the Upper Wentlooge formation (Haslett et al 1998). The uppermost portions of the strata show a series of marine regressions and transgression with evidence for the formation of creeks and soil formation (Terra Nova 2001).

Archaeological background

1.5 Archaeological interest in the site arose from its position within a known late prehistoric, Roman and later landscape on the Northmarsh of the Somerset Levels, for which more detailed references can be found in two preceding desk-based assessments (CAT 1999; CgMs 2007). The site lies on the outskirts of the shrunken medieval settlement of St George's (SMR 9716). A recent evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology (CA 2004) revealed evidence of possible Bronze Age or earlier Iron Age activity in the form of a large ditch with highly organic fills immediately to the south-west of the proposed development area, as well as a later burnt area and ditches consistent with Iron Age and Roman activity seen elsewhere at St George's (see 2.4 below). A subsequent evaluation immediately to the north east of the development site, on land to the east of The Hedges, revealed undated but probably late prehistoric or Early Roman deposits and ditches, with possible evidence for peat cutting in the vicinity of the site (CA 2005). These features may represent elements of an Early Roman industrial landscape, perhaps for channelling salt water to saltmaking areas. AMS radiocarbon dates from a V-shaped ditch suggested a possible phase of enclosed pasture, or perhaps early attempts at reclamation, which maybe contemporary with or slightly later than the saltmaking period. Later ditches incorporating an increased proportion of domestic waste suggested that a settlement was established in the vicinity of the site by the 3rd/4th century AD, supporting a long-held view that reclamation of the marsh was complete around the 3rd century AD. Later alluvial deposits sealing these features appear to relate to the abandonment of the Roman drainage systems and subsequent flooding, with re-colonisation of the area taking place in the medieval period.

1.6 St George's possessed a sub-circular infield of a type characterised by Rippon (1996, 1997) on many of the medieval settlements of the Northmarsh. These are thought to date to the 9th-10th century, representing the initial phase of re-colonisation of the Northmarsh after the large-scale abandonment at the end of the Roman period.

1.7 Most of the infields examined so far have yielded evidence of Roman occupation, and evaluation, excavation and watching briefs on new developments and infrastructure works to the north of the site have revealed evidence of Iron Age and Roman activity. Evidence of Roman salt production has been identified at the Persimmon Homes (NGR ST 3750 6335) and Bloor Homes (NGR ST 3753 6337)

developments, and during infrastructure works to create a new rhyne and flood plain along the western edge of the St George's development site. This consisted of patches of burnt clay and stone in association with late Iron Age/early Roman pottery, and cut features (ditches or pits) filled with briquetage. The briquetage assemblage appears to consist of salt processing apparatus such as pedestals and salt pans. A series of V-shaped drainage ditches of probable Roman date were also identified during the infrastructure watching brief (Terra Nova 2001), along with possible enclosure ditches, although these were only seen in section. The majority of the V-shaped ditches and briquetage filled features seen in the construction of a new drainage rhyne appeared to be on a north-west/south-east alignment. These features extend in the direction of the proposed development site. Evidence of possible 1st century Romano-British settlement was also found to the north east at the Persimmon Homes (NGR ST 3750 and 6335) development and in the form of pits, gullies and ditches immediately to the north east of the salt making site. Evaluation and excavation at Grapevine Farm SMR 40247 (NGR ST 3745 6305; CA 2003), immediately to the north east, revealed a flat-bottomed cut feature containing 20 sherds of late Roman pottery, suggesting Roman occupation within the vicinity of the site.

1.8 Roman landscapes have also been recorded on excavations to the south of the site (SMR 40092 and SMR 44926), and to the south-east (SMR 42876), which may relate to a major Roman villa.

1.9 Evidence for medieval and post-medieval activity has also been recorded during evaluation and building work at the Prowting development site, including medieval ditches, pits and gullies associated with Grove Farm SMR 40246 (NGR ST 3765 6313) and a building appearing on the Tithe map SMR 40841 (NGR ST 3763 6310) (CAT 2002). Evaluation on the Bloor development SMR 40839 (NGR ST 3755 6320) also revealed medieval activity in the form of pits and ditches (CAT 2002a). A medieval pit and post-medieval structures were also revealed during evaluation and excavation at Grapevine Farm SMR 40247 (NGR ST 3745 6305; CA 2003).

Archaeological objectives

1.10 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date and extent of any archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site. This information will assist the North Somerset Council Planning and Environment

Directorate in making an informed judgement on the significance of the archaeological resource, and the likely impact upon it of the proposed development.

Methodology

1.11 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of five trenches: Trench 1 measured 40.5m in length and 1.8m wide, trenches 2 and 4 measured 35m in length and 1.8m wide, Trench 3 measured 27.5m in length and 1.8m wide and Trench 5 was 30m in length and 1.8m wide, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The trenches were positioned to give maximum coverage of any features occurring in a north-west/south-east alignment, which is the alignment of previously recorded V-shaped ditches, and any features set a at right angle to this system (see *Archaeological Background* above). In particular Trenches 1, 2 and 4 were oriented to intercept any potential continuation of the briquetage rich features running on a north-west/south-east alignment, seen approximately 200m to the north-west of the site during construction of the Rhyne which bounds the western side of The Hedges in 2001. Trench 5 was situated to investigate the relationship between the ruinous stone barn at the east end of the site (CgMs 2007, 12) and the periphery of the St George's (later Grapvine) Farm complex, as shown on Ordnance Survey plans included within the desk-based assessment (ibid. Figs 4-7).

1.12 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* (2007).

1.13 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003) and no deposits were identified that required sampling. No artefacts pre-dating the modern period were identified and although modern pottery and ceramic building material were noted during recording these artefacts were not recovered.

1.14 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive will be deposited

with the North Somerset Museum Service. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS

2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix B.

2.2 Trenches 1 and 3 contained no archaeological features; alluvial deposits, buried modern topsoil and subsoil were identified sealed by a layer of modern material probably dumped from adjacent developments. Within all five trenches the alluvial deposits were comparable and have been interpreted as a single contemporary event.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

2.3 The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 2 consisted of a brownish grey alluvium 201. This deposit was cut by a substantial modern straw filled pit 203. The above feature and deposits were sealed by a layer of modern made ground 200.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 and 3)

2.4 An alluvial deposit 404, similar to that identified in the other trenches constituted the earliest deposit revealed within Trench 4. A sub rectangular pit 406 cut deposit 404 and was filled with clayey silt containing modern ceramic building material. The overlying subsoil 403 and topsoil 402 were sealed by modern made ground 401 and modern turf layer 400.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

2.5 Alluvium layer 504 comprised the earliest deposit within Trench 5. An undated pit 506, and larger modern pit 508, cut 504. Although no artefacts were recovered, modern pottery and ceramic building material fragments were noted in pit 508.

Above this level a similar sequence of subsoil, topsoil and modern made ground was noted as in Trench 4.

The Finds and Palaeoenvironmental Evidence

2.6 No artefacts were collected during the investigations, although modern material was noted in three pits, and the substantial made ground deposits contained modern building debris including brick, plastic and metal.

2.7 No deposits were identified that required environmental sampling.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Two phases of activity were identified: undated and modern. These were represented by episodes of alluvial formation and pit digging, and all were buried at considerable depth below present ground level.

3.2 Comparable alluvial deposits 103, 201, 302, 404, 504 were identified across the whole of the development area between 0.72 and 1.23m below present ground surface. These remain undated, although similar alluvial deposits identified during previous archaeological works in the vicinity (CA 2003, 2004 and 2005), sealed deposits of prehistoric and Roman date, and were cut by medieval and later features. One undated pit cut these alluvial deposits, and is therefore likely to be medieval or later in date.

3.3 Modern deposits consisted of three pits 203, 406 and 508. These contained artefacts consistent with the disposal of domestic and farm waste. Buried subsoil and topsoil deposits were identified overlying the pits. These soils were notably absent from the central portion of the site (Trenches 2 and 3) and were probably removed prior to the dumping of modern material from recent residential development in the vicinity. This modern dump varied in thickness from 0.3 to 1.23m.

3.4 The only dateable deposits recorded relate to the use of the site in the modern period, and appear to represent the disposal of farm and domestic waste in rubbish pits. Although no prehistoric and Roman features were identified during the course of the evaluation, data from adjacent archaeological investigations suggests that, if present, these would have been buried at greater depth than could be recorded safely during the present evaluation due to up to 1.23m of modern material having been dumped across the site in recent times.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Ray Holt, assisted by Jon Bennett, Matt Edmonds, Vicky Rees and Sian Reynish. The report was written by Ray Holt. The illustrations were prepared by Peter Moore. The archive has been compiled by Ray Holt, and prepared for deposition by Kathryn Price. The project was managed for CA by Simon Cox.

5. REFERENCES

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2003 *Grapevine Farm, St George's, Worle, North Somerset: Archaeological Evaluation and Excavation* CA Report No. **03047**

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Dumped material			0.45	Modern
101	Layer	Buried topsoil below 100			0.2	Modern
102	Layer	Buried subsoil below 101			0.3	Modern
103	Layer	Alluvium below 102			1	

Trench 2

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Layer	Dumped material			1.23	Modern
201	Layer	Alluvium below 200			0.72	
202	Fill	Fill of 203. Frequent straw	6.7	2	0.3	Modern
203	Cut	Sub circular pit filled by 202	6.7	2	0.3	Modern

Trench 3

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
300	Layer	Turf			0.15	Modern
301	Layer	Dumped material below 301			0.75	Modern
302	Layer	Alluvium below 302			0.8	

Trench 4

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
400	Layer	Turf			0.15	Modern
401	Layer	Dumped material below 400			0.3	Modern
402	Layer	Buried topsoil below 401			0.15	Modern
403	Layer	Buried subsoil below 402			0.2	Modern
404	Layer	Alluvium below 403			0.9	
405	Fill	Fill of 406. Occasional ceramic building material	2	1.9		Modern
406	Cut	Sub rectangular pit filled by 405	2	1.9		Modern

Trench 5

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
500	Layer	Turf			0.2	Modern
501	Layer	Dumped material below 500			0.38	Modern
502	Layer	Buried topsoil below 501			0.07	Modern
503	Layer	Buried subsoil below 502			0.07	Modern
504	Layer	Alluvium below 503			0.98	
505	Fill	Fill of 506	1.5	0.8		
506	Cut	Sub oval pit filled by 505	1.5	0.8		
507	Fill	Fill of 508. Occasional ceramic building material and modern pottery	4.4	1.9		Modern

508	Cut	Sub oval pit filled by 508	4.4	1.9		Modern

APPENDIX B: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), calculated using the benchmark located adjacent to the railway track to the south of the site (6.36m AOD).

	Trench 1	Trench 2	Trench 3	Trench 4	Trench 5
Current ground level	0.00m (5.86m)	0.00m (6.10m)	0.00m (6.12m)	0.00m (6.10m)	0.00m (6.08m)
Base of modern dumped material	0.45m (5.41m)	1.23m (4.87m)	0.9m (5.22m)	0.45m (5.65m)	0.58m (5.5m)
Top of alluvial deposits	0.95m (4.91m)	1.23m (4.87m)	0.9m (5.22m)	0.8m (5.3m)	0.72m (5.36m)
Limit of excavation	1.95m (3.91m)	1.95m (4.15m)	1.7m (4.42m)	1.7m (4.4m)	1.7m (4.38m)

Upper figures are depth below modern ground level; lower figures in parentheses are metres AOD.

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	The Ridings, St George's, Worle, North Somerset	
Short description (250 words maximum)	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in January 2008 at the request of CgMs on behalf of JS Bloor (Swindon) Ltd at The Ridings, St George's, Worle. In compliance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation, five trenches were excavated. One undated and three modern pits were recorded at between 0.72m to 1.23m below present ground level, cut into an underlying alluvial deposit and sealed by modern subsoil, topsoil and made ground.	
Project dates	23-28 January 2008	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Field evaluation	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	Desk Based Assessment	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	The Ridings, St George's, Worle, North Somerset	
Study area (M^2/ha)	325 M^2	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	ST 3736 6292	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	None	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Simon Cox	
Project Supervisor	Ray Holt	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive North Somerset Museum Services	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		None
Paper		Trench recording forms, Day record sheets, Photographic register, Levels register, Plans, Matrices
Digital		Digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 *The Ridings, St George's, Worle, North Somerset: Archaeological Evaluation* CA Report No. **08021** CgMs 2007 *The Ridings, St George's, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.*		

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PROJECT TITLE
The Ridings, St George's, Worle
North Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

DRAWN BY	SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
PJM	1:25,000@A4	2509	**1**

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N

T5
undated pit 506
modern pit 508
T4
modern pit 406
T3
T2
modern pit 203
T1

630
628
ST
372
374

0 100m

site
evaluation trench showing archaeological feature
bund

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PROJECT TITLE
The Ridings, St George's, Worle
North Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan showing archaeological features

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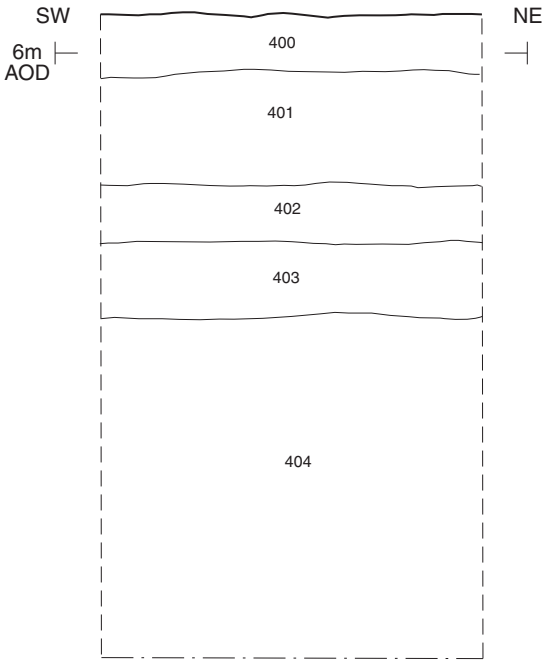
PJM	1:1250@A3	2509	**2**

Trench 4; representative section



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COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE
The Ridings, St George's, Worle
North Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
Trench 4; representative section

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