

The Old George Inn High Street Stony Stratford Milton Keynes

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
CMI Architecture Ltd
on behalf of
Mr Malcolm Wilson

CA Project: MK0134
Site Code: OGI19
Event Number: EMK1407
Accession Number: TBC
CA Report: MK0134_1

March 2020



The Old George Inn
 High Street
 Stony Stratford
 Milton Keynes

Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: MK0134
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Summary

Project Name: The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford
Location: The Old George Inn, 41 High Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, MK11 1AA
NGR: 478758, 240427
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 13 February 2020
Planning Reference: 16/02969/FUL
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Milton Keynes Museum
Event Number: EMK1407
Accession Number: AYBCM:2019.131
Site Code: OGI19

In February 2020, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with development at The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford. The development works consisted of a two storey rear extension, providing 4 new guest bedrooms and a new cellar, minor internal alterations and the removal of two bay windows on an existing single storey rear extension. Only one site monitoring visit was undertaken, ground reduction works between 0.8m and 1m below present ground level were observed. Layers consisting of mixed clay and coarse sand overlain with compacted coarse sand and gravel were recorded. Natural geology was not observed.

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 February 2020 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for CMI Architecture Ltd. on behalf of Mr Malcolm Wilson at The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes (centred at NGR: 478758, 240427; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to planning consent (Planning ref: 16/02969/FUL) for a two storey rear extension, providing 4 new guest bedrooms and a new cellar, along with minor internal alterations and the removal of two bay windows on an existing single storey rear extension.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with Condition 3, which states that:
- 'Prior to the commencement of development, the applicant shall employ an archaeological contractor to carry out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording (a watching brief) on all foundations, service trenches and any other works involving excavations in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological contractor will give the Local Planning Authority five days' notice of the commencement of the watching brief and produce a report with plans, sections, and detailed drawings of the findings within three months of the completion of the work. Two copies of the report will be provided to the Council's Historic Environment Record'.*
- 1.3 The scope of this programme of archaeological works, which comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks, including but not limited to, the excavation of foundations and service trenches, was defined during discussions between CA and Nick Crank, Milton Keynes Council Senior Archaeology Officer (MKCSAO) the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA). A subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2019a) was approved by the LPA acting on the advice of Nick Crank. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014). It was monitored by Nick Crank, comprising correspondence by email. Following correspondence from CA (by email) on the 13th February 2020 providing a summary, plan and photographs of the area monitored, Nick Crank advised that no further site visits were required.

The site

- 1.4 The site comprises the Old George Inn and associated ground. The area of groundworks (as indicated on Figs. 2 and 3) consisted of a concrete surfaced car park and loading area, previously used for refuse storage, to the rear of the Old George Inn. The area is enclosed by a high brick wall to its south-east (Fig. 6) and by a high stone wall to its south-west forming part of the grounds associated with the public house (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 71m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) on relatively flat ground.
- 1.5 The development area is approximately 634m², and comprises grounds adjoining a Grade II Listed, mid-16th century building in use as a public house, with associated courtyard garden.
- 1.6 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as mudstone of the Rutland Formation, laid down during the Jurassic period (BGS 2020). Stony Stratford is located on a series of Quaternary river terrace deposits consisting of sands and gravels. The natural geology was not encountered during the course of the watching brief.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been presented in detail in a Heritage Statement (CA 2016). The following summary has been taken from the Heritage Statement along with a brief summary of the Historic Environment Record data and previous archaeological monitoring and fieldwork in the immediate surrounding area. Historic Building Recording was carried out at the site in October 2019 (CA 2019b), the results of which have also informed the following summary.

Prehistoric and Roman periods (pre-AD 43 – AD 410)

- 2.2 The site is located on the line of Watling Street, a major Roman road running between Dover and Wroxeter, passing through St Albans, Stony Stratford and Towcester. Stony Stratford is located at a strategic position on the road, controlling a ford over the River Great Ouse equidistant between the Roman towns of Towcester and Fenny Stratford to the south.

2.3 Approximately 640m from the site, at the former 'White Swan' public house, a hoard of gold coins of Roman date was recovered during works in the 1940's (HER Ref: MMK5735). A small number of additional isolated find-spots comprising a few sherds of Iron Age and Roman pottery are also recorded on the HER within 600m of the site.

Early medieval and medieval periods (AD 410 – 1539)

2.4 Early medieval (Anglo-Saxon) occupation of the wider area has been well documented, but there is no archaeological evidence to suggest Stony Stratford was established prior to the Norman Conquest.

2.5 The only evidence of potential early medieval date recorded within the vicinity of the site is an 'early medieval feature' found during works at 62 High Street.

2.6 The historic core of Stony Stratford developed to either side of Watling Street within two parishes; Wolverton to the north of the road, and Calverton to the south. Although owned by two parishes, the development of burgage plots occurred along both sides of the High Street. Burgage plots are commonly found in 'new towns' of the medieval period, where strips of land were laid out in lines leading away from the main thoroughfares to offer both street front access, and a reasonable plot of land to the rear for ancillary buildings, gardens and waste disposal.

2.7 Approximately 480m from the site is the Church of Saint Mary and Saint Giles, the current parish church, which potentially dates to the 14th century. Further, approximately 800m from the site is the remains of the Church and churchyard of St Mary Magdalen, thought to have been built in the late 13th century. The church was not rebuilt following a fire in 1752; however, burials continued to be interred in the churchyard until the mid-19th century (Historic England 2020).

2.8 Stony Stratford is recorded to have a hospital with chapel built in the 13th century. This originally served as a leper hospital and is also noted as serving as a hospital for the poor in the mid-14th century (HER ref: MMK2615 and MMK2616).

2.9 A coin dated to c.1300 was located approximately 460m from the Site (HER ref: MMK2651).

Post-medieval and modern periods (1539 - present)

- 2.10 Various HER records of post-medieval and modern date exist, including a record of a Boat House c.800m from the Site dated to at least 1900 and several findspots of clay pipes and post-medieval pottery (such as HER ref: MMK4006).
- 2.11 The 19th century saw a number of building developments take place in Stony Stratford, including a new Parish Hall and infant school, dated to the middle of the century c.600m from the Site. Gravel extraction is also recorded in the area during the 19th century with the evidence of gravel pits in both Stony Stratford and Old Stratford (HER ref: MMK6196).
- 2.12 The core of the Old George Inn was constructed during the 17th century, likely comprising a hall and cross-wing. This would have included a shop or inn on the street frontage, and family bedrooms to the rear of the frontage building. In the Late 18th century an 'L' shaped block was added to the south of the original structure, extending the capacity of the Inn. Further additions were made during the 20th century, adding extensions off the southern and eastern elevations, providing cellars, storage, a kitchen area and two further guest rooms (CA 2019b).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
 - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2019a). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks (in the area shown on Figs. 2 and 3) until agreed with the MKCSAO that attendance was no longer required as detailed in Section 1.3. Non-archaeologically significant deposits were removed by

the contractors under archaeological supervision. Where mechanical excavators were used, these were equipped with a toothless bucket.

4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3 The archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Milton Keynes. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the archive will be deposited with Milton Keynes Museum under an accession number (tbc). 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 (FIGS 2-7)

5.1 Groundworks involved the excavation of a new building footprint to the rear of the existing property (across the area shown on Figs. 2 and 3). The present ground level was recorded as 66.94m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), and the area monitored was excavated to a depth of 65.94m aOD at the northern extent of the area. The natural geological substrate was not observed during the groundworks. The earliest layer recorded consisted of redeposited natural and levelling material (1003), comprising a mid-brown-yellow mix of coarse sands and clays with inclusions of glass milk bottle and machine-made frogged brick. This layer was revealed across the monitored area at an average depth of c.66.49m AOD. This was overlain by a compacted mid-brown-orange mix of coarse sand and gravels (1002) averaging 0.3m in thickness, this layer was truncated by service ducts for sewerage and surface water relating to the George Inn, which were recorded in plan (Figs.3 and 7). The backfill material of these modern services were in turn sealed by a compacted and partially concreted dark black brown mix of coarse sand and flint gravels (1001) averaging 0.1m in thickness which was in turn sealed by concrete (1000) measuring 0.5m thick .

5.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the late 19th century period was recovered.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the site the watching brief revealed no archaeological remains within the area monitored (Fig.3). The absence of archaeological deposits or features may indicate that any such remains, if present have been removed during previous development for The Old George Inn and associated works at the rear of the inn. This development is thought to have occurred in several phases from late 16th century onwards (CA 2019b) including the late 18th century 'L' shaped extension the rear of the original building, and two phases of 20th century work extending the structure to the south and east. Layer 1003, the earliest deposit recorded on site, contained inclusions of machine-made frogged brick and glass milk bottle, suggesting that it is broadly contemporary with the 20th century extension on the eastern side of the structure. Accordingly, it is considered likely that this development removed or sealed any earlier remains including evidence for activity within the former medieval burgage plot.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Whelan. The report was written by Andrew Whelan. The illustrations were prepared by Ryan Wilson. The archive has been compiled by Emily Evans and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Michelle Collings.

8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2020 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 10 March 2020

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 *The Old George Stony Stratford, Heritage Statement*, CA Report No. 16187

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2019a *The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2019b, *The Old George, High Street, Stony Stratford Milton Keynes. Historic Building Recording*

ClfA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) 2014 *Standard and guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Historic England (2020) *Remains of the church and churchyard of St Mary Magdalen*, List Entry Number 1021371 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1021371>

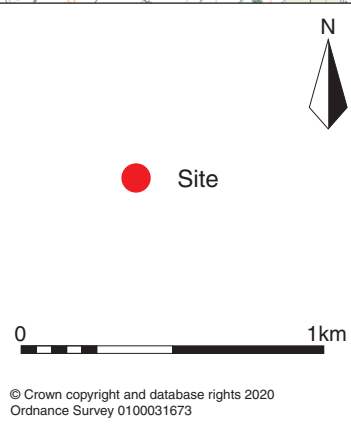
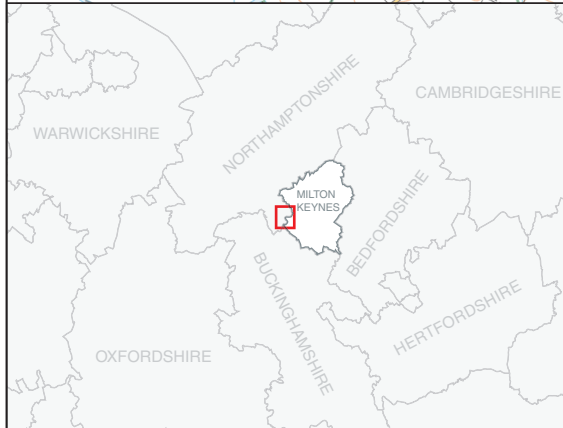
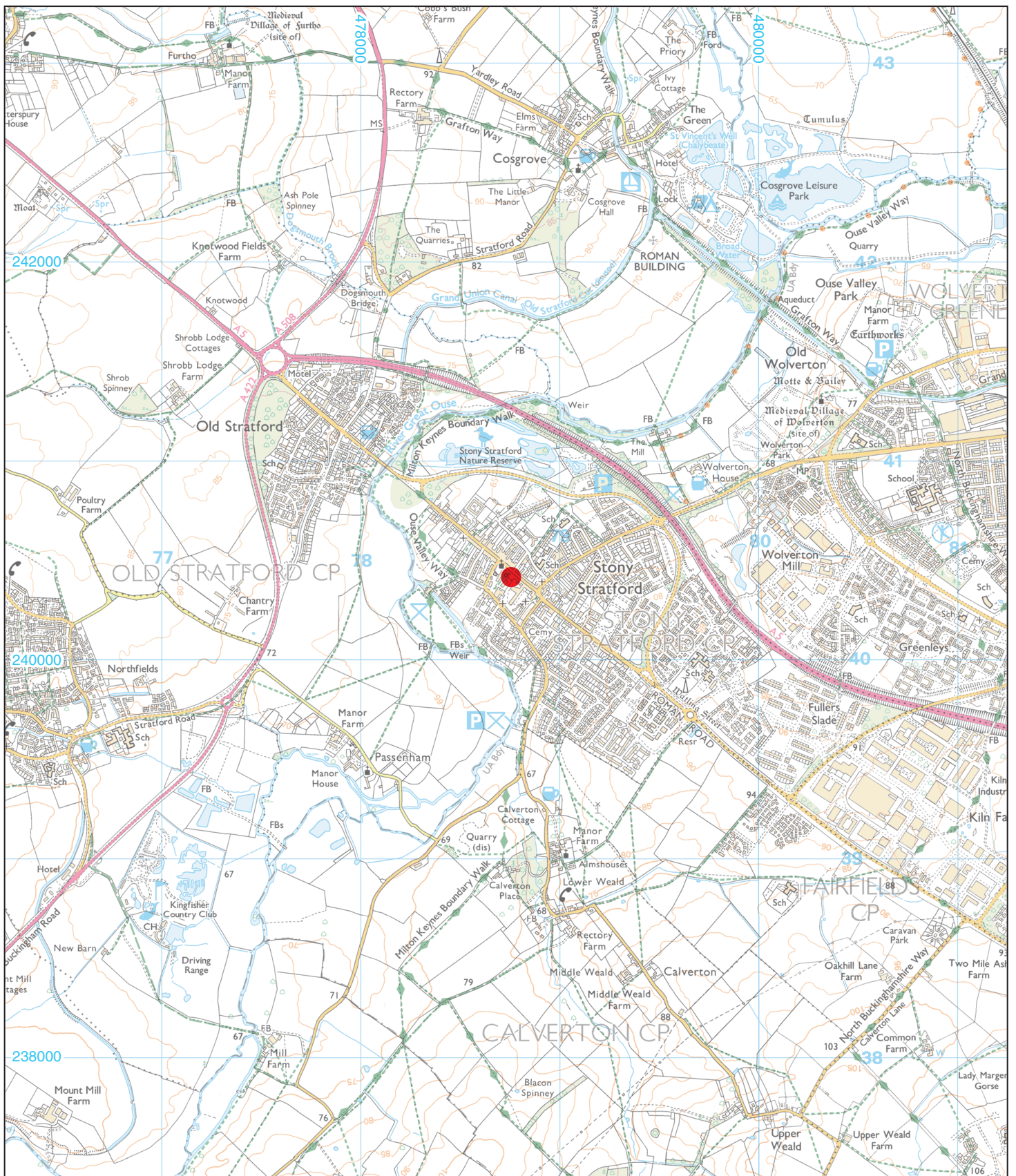
Accessed 10th March 2020

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

| Context No. | Type | Context interpretation | Description | L (m) | W (m) | Depth /thickness (m) | Spot-date |
|-------------|-------|------------------------|--|-------|-------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1000 | Layer | topsoil | Light white yellow, concrete with small flint inclusions. | >11.1 | >4.7 | 0.05 | Modern |
| 1001 | Layer | subsoil | Dark black brown mix of coarse sand and flint gravels. | >11.1 | >4.7 | 0.1 | Modern |
| 1002 | Layer | Deposit | Mid brown orange mix of coarse sand and gravels, with inclusions of glass and CBM. | >11.1 | >4.7 | 0.3 | Modern |
| 1003 | Layer | Deposit | Mid-brown yellow mix of coarse sands and clays, with inclusions of glass and CBM. | >11.1 | >4.7 | >0.3 | |

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

| PROJECT DETAILS | | |
|--|--|--|
| Project Name | The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford | |
| Short description | <p>In February 2020, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with development at The Old George Inn, High Street Stony Stratford. The development works consisted of a two storey rear extension, providing 4 new guest bedrooms and a new cellar, minor internal alterations and the removal of two bay windows on an existing single storey rear extension.</p> <p>Only one site monitoring visit was undertaken, ground reduction works between 0.8m and 1m below present ground level were observed. Layers consisting of mixed clay and coarse sand overlain with compacted coarse sand and gravel were recorded. Natural geology was not observed.</p> <p>No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.</p> | |
| Project dates | 13 th February 2020 | |
| Project type | Watching Brief | |
| Previous work | Heritage Statement, CA 2015 | |
| Future work | Unknown | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | |
| Site Location | The Old George Inn, 41 High Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, MK11 1AA | |
| Study area (M ² /ha) | 634m ² | |
| Site co-ordinates | 478758, 240427 | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | |
| Name of organisation | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Brief originator | Milton Keynes Council | |
|) originator | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Manager | Michelle Collings | |
| Project Supervisor | Andrew Whelan | |
| MONUMENT TYPE | | |
| | None | |
| SIGNIFICANT FINDS | | |
| | None | |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | |
| | Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.) | Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc) |
| Physical | | None |
| Paper | Milton Keynes Museum | Context sheets, Day sheet, Context register, drawings. |
| Digital | Milton Keynes Museum | Database, digital photos, Digital report. |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | |
| CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2020 The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford: <i>Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report MK0134_1 | | |



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PROJECT TITLE

The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

| | | | | |
|-------------|----|-------------|------------|------------|
| DRAWN BY | RW | PROJECT NO. | MK0134 | FIGURE NO. |
| CHECKED BY | RP | DATE | 14/02/2020 | |
| APPROVED BY | AW | SCALE@A4 | 1:25,000 | 1 |

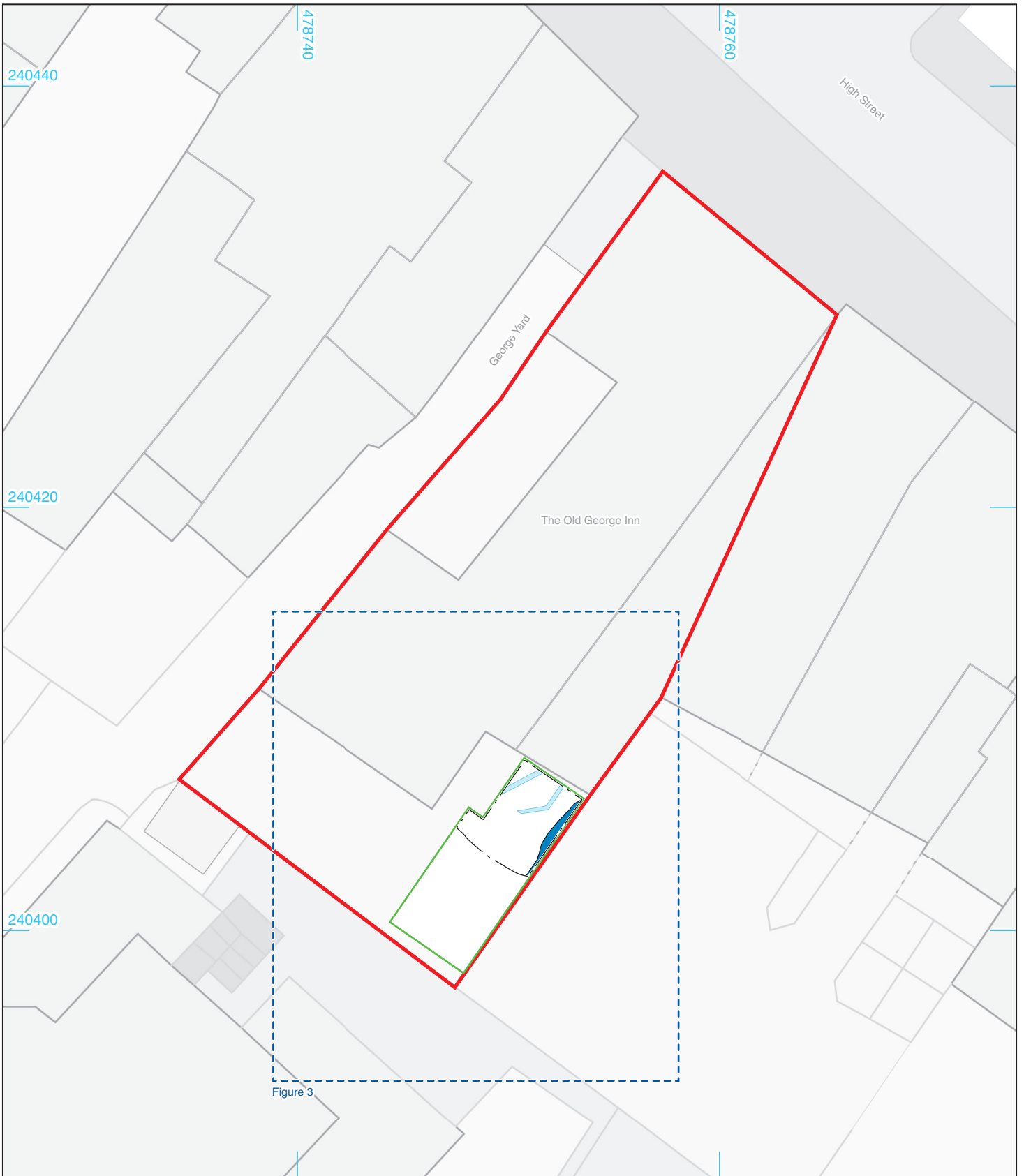


Figure 3

- Site boundary
- Area of groundworks
- Area monitored / observed
- Concrete
- Drain



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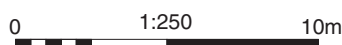
PROJECT TITLE

The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes

FIGURE TITLE

Location plan showing monitored area

| | | | | |
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| CHECKED BY | RP | DATE | 17/02/2020 | 2 |
| APPROVED BY | AW | SCALE@A4 | 1:250 | |





The Old George Inn








66.94
ground level

66.14

ceramic drain
plastic drain

waterlogged area

area remaining to be reduced

-  Site boundary
-  Area of groundworks
-  Area monitored / observed
-  Concrete
-  Drain
-  Section
-  Height mAO



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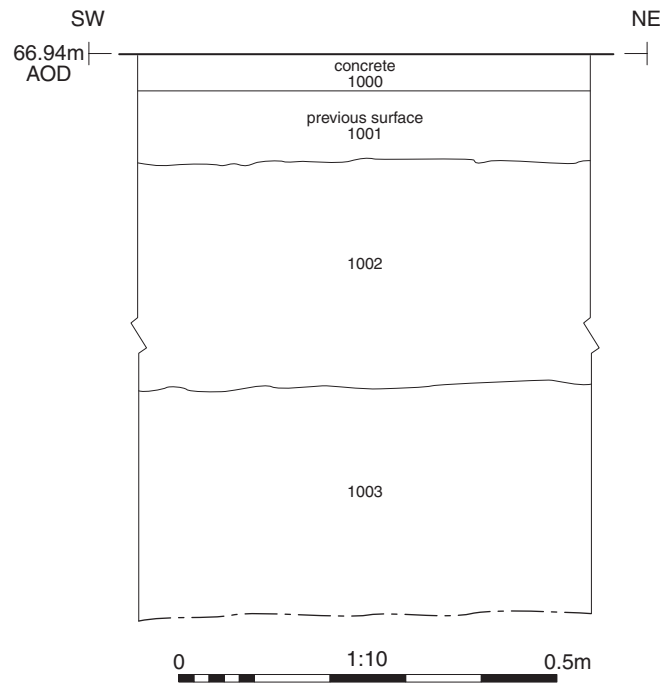
PROJECT TITLE
The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes

FIGURE TITLE
Detailed plan showing monitored area

| | | | | |
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| DRAWN BY | RW | PROJECT NO. | MK0134 | FIGURE NO. |
| CHECKED BY | RP | DATE | 17/02/2020 | 3 |
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Section AA



Site photograph looking north-west towards area reduced to 1m below present ground level



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PROJECT TITLE

The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes

FIGURE TITLE

Representative section and photograph

| | | | | |
|-------------|----|-------------|------------|------------|
| DRAWN BY | RW | PROJECT NO. | MK0134 | FIGURE NO. |
| CHECKED BY | RP | DATE | 14/02/2020 | |
| APPROVED BY | AW | SCALE@A4 | 1:10 | 4 |



Site photograph, looking downwards and south-east towards excavated area of site



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PROJECT TITLE

The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony
 Stratford, Milton Keynes

FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

| | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|------------|
| DRAWN BY | RW | PROJECT NO. | MK0134 | FIGURE NO. |
| CHECKED BY | RP | DATE | 14/02/2020 | |
| APPROVED BY | AW | SCALE@A4 | NA | 5 |



Site photograph, looking south-east towards area to be reduced to foundation level



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PROJECT TITLE

The Old George Inn, High Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes

FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

| | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|------------|
| DRAWN BY | RW | PROJECT NO. | MK0134 | FIGURE NO. |
| CHECKED BY | RP | DATE | 14/02/2020 | |
| APPROVED BY | AW | SCALE@A4 | NA | 6 |



Site photograph, looking north-east showing area reduced to 1m below present ground level



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PROJECT TITLE

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Stratford, Milton Keynes

FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|------------|
| DRAWN BY | RW | PROJECT NO. | MK0134 | FIGURE NO. |
| CHECKED BY | RP | DATE | 14/02/2020 | 7 |
| APPROVED BY | AW | SCALE@A4 | NA | |

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