

**NORMAN ARCH COTTAGE
HEREWARD ROAD
CIRENCESTER**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

For

THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY


CA PROJECT: 2931
CA REPORT: 09142

SEPTEMBER 2009

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HEREWARD ROAD
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prepared by	David Cudlip, Project Officer
date	28 August 2009
checked by	Richard Young, Project Manager
date	16 September 2009
approved by	Simon Cox, Head of Fieldwork
signed	
date	17 September 2009
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SUMMARY

Project Name: Norman Arch Cottage
Location: Cirencester, Gloucestershire
NGR: SP 0235 0248
Type: Evaluation
Date: 17 August 2009
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Corinium Museum, Cirencester
Site Code: NAC 09

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2009 at the request of the Environment Agency at Norman Arch Cottage, Hereward Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire. One trench was excavated.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified, and no finds pre-dating the modern period were recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2009 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for the Environment Agency at Norman Arch Cottage, Hereward Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SP 0235 0248; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken prior to determination of an application for Scheduled Monument Consent for the construction of a flood defence wall between the garage of Norman Arch Cottage and the parapet of Hereward Road bridge.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2009). The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008), the *Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Gloucestershire* (Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) 1995) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE)* (English Heritage 2006).

The site

1.3 The site lies on the southern bank of the river Churn, immediately adjacent to the garage of Norman Arch Cottage, Hereward Road, Cirencester. It lies immediately to the north of the Abbey Grounds.

1.5 The underlying geology of the area is mapped as alluvium of the Quaternary era (BGS 1998). A layer of silty sand was encountered 1m below present ground level (bpgl).

Archaeological background

1.6 The site lies within an area of high archaeological interest as detailed within an Archaeological Management Plan (CA 2008a), produced for Cirencester Town Council, from which the following summaries originate.

Roman

- 1.7 The Abbey Grounds are situated within the north-eastern corner of the Roman town, adjacent to the line of the Roman town defences which run parallel to the Abbey Lake, between the lake and the Outer Churn. Evidence for an early Roman town bank was found during excavations of the north-east defences on the line of the later town wall. The bank may have been constructed on the line of a pre-existing circuit, possibly at the same time as the construction of the Outer Churn in the late 1st or early 2nd century (Wacher and Pamment Salvatore 1998, 94). Subsequent earth and clay rampart material was identified, which encircled the whole of the town over a perimeter of 3.6km. During the excavation of 12 holes for play equipment in the playground area a brown clay/gravel layer was recorded, interpreted as the possible outer part of rampart deposits. Unfortunately there is no information on the depth of the deposit. In the 3rd century (probably between AD 240-70) a masonry wall was inserted into the front of the earthwork rampart (CA 2008a).

The Fosse Way

- 1.8 On the basis of alignment angles Hargreaves (1998, 11-17) and more recently Reece (2003, 276-80) have projected the alignment of the early Roman Fosse Way through the northern area of the town and the Abbey Grounds. This portion of the road, until the Baunton Downs some 4km to the north-east, is still hypothetical and has not been revealed by excavation. It was not recorded during the excavation of an electric cable trench across the Abbey Grounds in 1974.

Post-Roman and medieval

- 1.9 Cirencester Abbey was constructed in the early 12th century, probably when the old church was still standing (Bryant and Heighway 1998, 11). Work began shortly before the earliest work on the present parish church of St John.
- 1.10 The abbey fishpond was also probably originally constructed in the 12th century, although there is little information on its origins and there is no detailed cartographic representation until the 18th century. It was supplied by a second diversion of the River Churn, this time from the north diverted along the present course of Blake Road, into the fishpond, and running on along the course of the Inner Churn which survives today adjacent to Corinium Gate.

- 1.11 The Abbey precinct itself was walled along Dollar Street and Gosditch Street to the west, Spitalgate Lane ('Raton Rewe') to the north and the remains of the Roman defences to the east. The northern gateway to the precinct survives today as the Spital Gate, which lies immediately to the east of Norman Arch Cottage. Beside the Spital gate lay a small grange (a farm worked by lay brothers and hired labourers) was situated. The grange comprised around five smaller farm buildings and a large tithe barn, demolished at the beginning of the 19th century.

Medieval/post-medieval alluvium

- 1.12 Several investigations have recorded an alluvium horizon probably deposited in the medieval period and earlier post-medieval period. Works in and around the Abbey Lake in 2006 (CA 2006) identified alluvium from depths of 0.25m below the present ground level (bpgl), to at least 0.8m BGL; also from 0.25m bpgl during observation of groundworks for the Abbey Grounds play area (CA 2008b). The alluvial deposits therefore tend to be recorded in those investigations closest to the lake and Inner Churn, suggesting periodic flooding by that water course.

Post-medieval

The Dissolution and the destruction of the abbey

- 1.13 After the Dissolution of 1536-40 the abbey church and cloistral buildings were demolished, although several buildings of practical use within the precinct were retained, including those of Spitalgate Grange and the Infirmary or Abbot's Lodging next to the abbey itself.

Archaeological objectives

- 1.14 The objectives of the evaluation are to provide data on the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area in order that an informed decision on their importance in a local, regional or national context can be made. This information will clarify whether any remains are of sufficient importance to warrant consideration for preservation *in situ*, or alternatively form the basis of mitigation measures that may seek to limit damage to significant remains.

Methodology

- 1.15 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of one test pit measuring 1m in length and 1m in width in the location shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The test pit was excavated by hand to the natural substrate. All excavation and recording was undertaken in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.16 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). No deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts encountered were processed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of Finds Immediately After Excavation* (1995). The pottery recovered was of 20th-century date and has not been retained.
- 1.17 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Corinium Museum along with the site archive. 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 (FIGS 2-3)

- 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 The silty clay natural substrate 104 was identified at 1m bpgl. It was sealed by loose limestone rubble 103, from which modern pottery was recovered. Layer 103 was sealed by gravel make-up 102, again containing modern material. This was sealed by root-disturbed topsoil 101, which was covered by modern landscaping gravel layer 100.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 No archaeological remains were identified in the course of the evaluation. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that structural remains associated with the Roman or medieval occupation of Cirencester either did not extend as far as the site or that they have been removed by the construction of the garage of Norman Arch House or the southern retaining wall of the river Churn.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by David Cudlip, assisted by Heather Griggs. The report was written by David Cudlip. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by David Cudlip, and prepared for deposition by Victoria Taylor. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. REFERENCES

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Wacher, J.S. and Pamment-Salvatore, J. 1998 'The Town Defences' in Holbrook, N. (Ed) 1998

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Modern landscaping gravel	1	1	0.05	
101	Layer	Root-disturbed topsoil	1	1	0.15	
102	Layer	Modern gravel make-up	1	1	0.4	
103	Layer	Limestone rubble in a sandy silt matrix	1	1	0.4	
104	Layer	Natural: Pale yellow-brown silty sand	1	1	L.O.E.	

APPENDIX B: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS

Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), calculated using the benchmark located on the bridge over the river Churn at Spitalgate Lane (111.50m AOD).

	Trench 1
Current ground level	0.00m (110.25m)
Top of natural substrate	1m (109.25m)
Limit of excavation	1m (109.25m)

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

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Norman Arch Cottage, Hereward Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2009 at the request of the Environment Agency at Norman Arch Cottage, Hereward Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire. One trench was excavated. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified, and no finds pre-dating the modern period were recovered.	
Project dates	17 August 2009	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Evaluation	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Norman Arch Cottage, Hereward Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	5m ²	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SP 0235 0248	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	English Heritage	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	David Cudlip	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	N/A	
Paper	Corinium Museum	Trench sheet, photo sheets, level sheet, b+w photographs
Digital	Corinium Museum	Digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2009 Norman Arch Cottage, Hereward Road, Cirencester: <i>Archaeological Evaluation</i> Unpublished CA Report 09142		

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 **COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY**

PROJECT TITLE
Norman Arch Cottage, Hereward Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

DRAWN BY	SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
RK	1:25,000@A4	2931	1

235



242

River Churn

Norman Arch Cottage

Garage
1




Hereward Road

20

SP

0

25m

-  site
-  evaluation trench
-  Roman town wall (conjectural)



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Norman Arch Cottage, Hereward Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench location plan

DRAWN BY

RK

SCALE

1:200@A4

PROJECT NO.


2931

FIGURE NO.

2



3

		 COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY	
		<small>PROJECT TITLE</small> Norman Arch Cottage, Hereward Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
		<small>FIGURE TITLE</small> Photograph of trench 1, looking north-west	
<small>DRAWN BY</small>	<small>SCALE</small>	<small>PROJECT NO.</small>	<small>FIGURE NO.</small>
RK	n/a	2931	3