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Interpretation, Design & Display

**Former Taylors Yard, Newport Pagnell, Milton
Keynes:
Archaeological Watching Brief
Report No. MK092/17**

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1. SUMMARY

CFA Archaeology Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief for Shiel Developments Ltd during the creation of new services for the housing development at the former Taylor's Yard in Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes (centred on SP 87688 44005). The Site is located to the rear of no. 2 Union Street, in the historic core of the town. The Watching brief revealed old topsoil and made ground, but no significant archaeology.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. General

This document presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) on the 31st of August and the 1st of September 2017 during the creation of new services for the housing developments at former Taylor's Yard, Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes. The work was commissioned by Shiel Developments Ltd.

2.2. Project Background

The watching brief was carried out to fulfil a planning condition attached to planning application 15/01028/FUL issued by Milton Keynes District Council, and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Roberts 2017) dated June 2017, covering this programme of works produced by CFA and which was approved by the District Planning Authority.

The development site (hereafter the Site), centred on SP 87688 44005, occupies 1343m² and comprises a north-east to south-west aligned burgage plot between Union Street and High Street. The development involves the conversion of the existing structures to flats using many of the old foundations. The overall ground levels were maintained in the final development.

2.3. Archaeological Background

The WSI states the following:

The site of the development is situated in the medieval core of Newport Pagnell, within an area suggested to have been occupied by the Saxon burgh. Although the burgh deferences have proven elusive, evidence for Saxon occupation was revealed in a watching brief at Bury Lawn, c. 50m to the north-west in 1990 (MMK3903).

Other small-scale archaeological investigations in the vicinity have uncovered evidence for Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval activity. Of significance are the results of an evaluation and watching brief in land to the rear of 4-6 Union Street, immediately west of the site. This revealed intact and relatively deeply stratified late medieval and post-medieval features and deposits (over 1m deep in places). In the evaluation phase, two large late medieval/early post-medieval pits, and a sequence of intercutting pits and structural remains were uncovered. These dated from the 15-16th century through into 19th century, although a small quantity of residual Saxo-Norman pottery was also recovered (Lodoen and Ingham 2007).

A subsequent watching brief revealed a number of archaeological features, including probable medieval layers and ditches set on a north-east to south-west orientation, possibly representing domestic plot boundaries. Post medieval and modern features were also encountered, including pits, ditches robbed-out foundation trenches and demolition layers (Turner 2008).

Around 30m to the south, a watching brief conducted to the rear of 40-42 High Street revealed over 0.8m of stratigraphy, including a 13-14th century cesspit and evidence of 14-15th century ironworking (Lisboa 2002). An intervention at the rear of 30-32 High Street also revealed a circular feature approximately 1m diameter filled with green-grey clay of organic origin with charcoal flecks, oyster shells and pottery of 11th-14th century date (MMK5499-5500).

2.4. Geology

The surface geology of the site is unmapped, but underlying bedrock geology is Oxford Clay of Peterborough Member (BGS). The current site surface slopes gently from c. 61m OD to 57m OD northward toward Union Street and the River Great Ouse.

2.5. Objectives

There was the potential for the disturbance of buried archaeological remains.

In general the project objectives were to:

- determine the form and function of any archaeological features encountered;
- determine the spatial arrangement of any archaeological features encountered;

- as far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features;
- establish the sequence of any archaeological remains present on the site, and;
- produce a report which places any discovered archaeological remains in their local, regional or national context, as appropriate.

The Research Objectives were to:

- to investigate the evidence for and origins of the different phases of land use and enclosure within the area, including any evidence for pre-Roman, Roman, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval activity;
- to place the results of the investigation within the wider landscape context and contribute to an understanding of the pattern of land use;
- using the spectrum of environmental techniques appropriate for this aspect of investigation, an attempt was to be made to model the landscape and its transformation brought about by the settlement's inhabitants and due to natural events.

Research objectives were to be re-evaluated during the course of the project to reflect the nature and significance of findings, they were informed by and followed the regional research framework (Hey and Hind 2014).

3. WORKING METHODS

3.1. General

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance (CIfA 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d).

3.2. Archaeological Monitoring

Ground works were monitored by an archaeologist. The machining was undertaken using toothed bucket 0.4m wide for the removal of concrete/tarmac layer. Toothless bucket of the same width was used afterwards. Work was paused when there was a probability that archaeological features were encountered.

3.3. Excavation and Recording Strategy

All archaeological remains were recorded by means of photographs, drawings and written records conforming to CIfA standards (2014b, 2014c) and CFA's quality manuals. All features were planned and deposits drawn in section and plan at an appropriate scale (1:50 and 1:100). The photographic record consisted of digital photographs.

3.4. Archiving

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, finds, plans and reports, will conform to current guidelines e.g. MoRPHE (HE 2015), Brown (2011), CIfA (2014d), MGC (1994), SMA (1995), Walker (1990). A proper transfer of ownership will be ensured, according to the guidance mentioned above. The project report shall include an index to the site archive.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1. General

The watching brief area is shown in fig. 1. Illustrations and photos referred to in the text can be found at the back of the report.

4.2. Stratigraphic layout

The excavated trench (Figs 2 and 3) revealed the following stratigraphy. The natural geology (03) comprised light orange-yellow clay with very occasionally occurring veins of light grey-blue clay running throughout (Fig. 4).

This was covered by 19th century subsoil 04, occurring in the very southern end of the trench and reappearing on the northernmost 30m. It was composed of dark grey-black silty clay of firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded stones, measuring 0.06-0.42m thick.

Layer 02 was made ground overlying 04 (Fig. 5). It was 0.28-0.52m thick, comprising dark brown-grey sandy silt of firm compaction, with frequent stone, post-medieval tiles and bricks, modern glass and animal bones.

The uppermost layer was a mixture of modern building elements overlying grey sandy rubble, with rubble and hardcore towards the southern side and cement towards north.

5. DISCUSSION

The plot was heavily disturbed by the ground levelling undertaken prior to building the existing dwellings. Despite the location of the plot, which is within the core of the medieval town, no archaeological features from this period were found.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The watching brief has revealed a made ground modern layers and possible old subsoil. However, no significant archaeological remains have been found.

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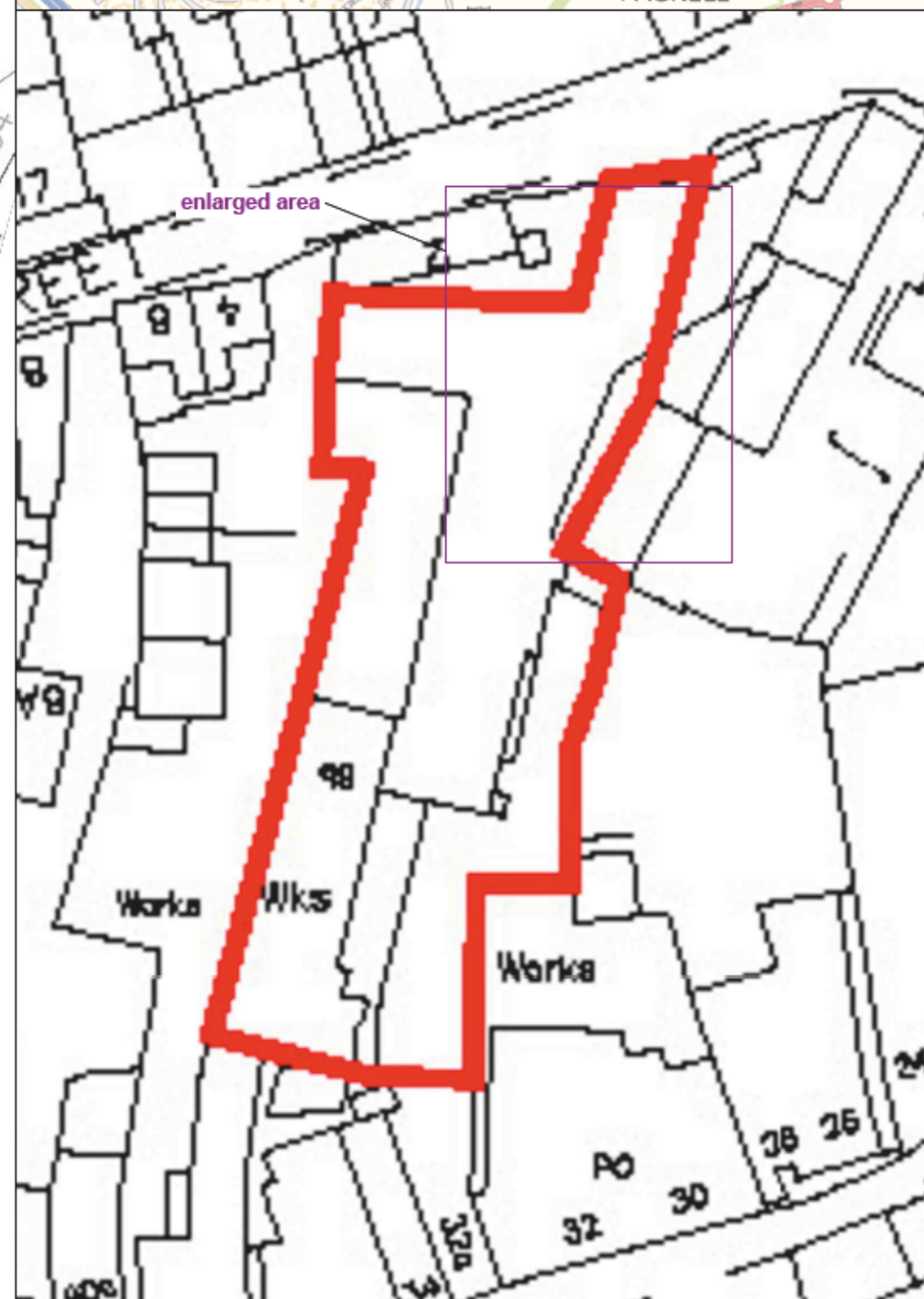
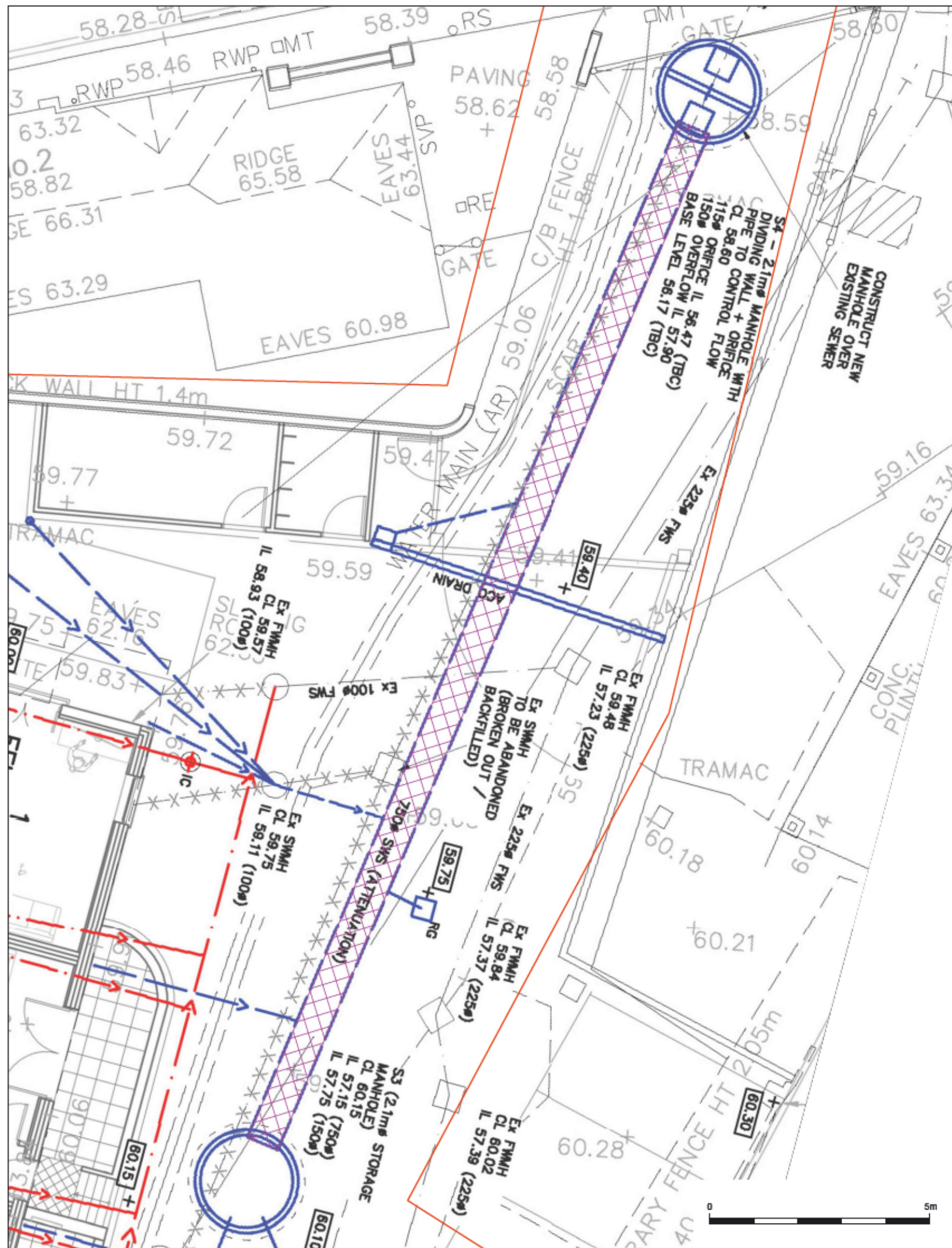
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Key:

- Site Boundary
- Watching Brief Area

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Title:
Site location plan showing watching brief area

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Archaeological Watching Brief

Client:
Shiel Developments Ltd

Scale at A3:
main inset: 1:100

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Report No: MK092/17	Fig. No: 1	



Fig. 2 - General shot of the northern part of the trench, taken from S



Fig. 3 - General shot of the southern part of the trench, taken from N

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Fig. 4 - Shot showing natural layer 03 at north end of the trench, taken from W



Fig. 5 - Layer 02 overlying layer 04 visible in the middle of the trench, taken from E

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